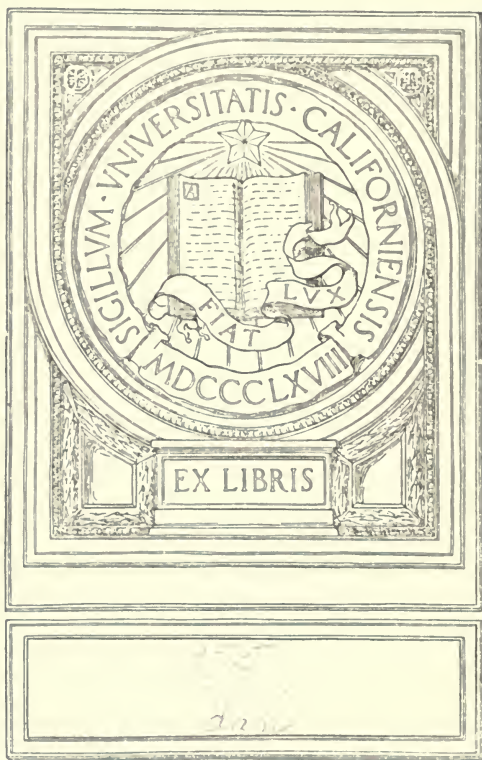


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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY,
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A DANVIS PIONEER

A STORY OF ONE OF ETHAN ALLEN'S
GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

BY

ROWLAND E. ROBINSON



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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A DANVIS PIONEER

CHAPTER I

AT THE DEER'S HEAD

ONE evening, more than a century and a quarter ago, there was a motley company gathered in the bar-room of the Deer's Head Tavern, the house of entertainment for man and beast in one of the border towns of Connecticut. There were farmers of the neighborhood, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, and the hatter, already proverbially drunk ; and there were young men, who dropped in to gather news of the wild, new lands to the northward from returning explorers and speculators.

Among these was an old hunter, a ranger of the old war, on his way to the rich trapping grounds that he had discovered and made note of during his military service.

He was a wiry little man, past middle age, baked in the sun, smoked by a thousand camp-fires, salted by the snows of many winters, until his hair and stubbly beard were as grizzled as a frosted hemlock, and his skin the color and toughness of jerked venison. His well ripened nose went frequently into a mug of flip, which he was drinking at the expense of his most interested listener, a tall, muscular young man, with keen gray eyes, a prominent, pointed nose, and a firm set mouth, all constantly turned upon the hunter to catch every word that dropped from his lips.

There was another listener, who was giving very close, though not so noticeable attention, while as yet taking no part in the conversation, but who silently sipped his rum and water as he cast furtive sidelong glances of his sharp, black eyes upon the old ranger and his young friend. He was clad from head to foot in a worn suit of rusty black which, with a sanctimonious cast of countenance, gave him the appearance of a clergyman.

“Yes, sir,” the hunter said, withdrawing

his nose from the mug after an exhaustive draught, and looking suggestively into the empty vessel, "if I was a young man, which I hain't, an' wanted tu farm it for a livin', which I don't, bein' tew old a dog tu l'arn new tricks, I'd jest go up there int' the wilderness, — 'way up, ye understan', where there hain't nob'dy, — an' I'd make me a pitch nigh tu good trappin', an' I'd resk but what I'd git enough fur, in tew year, fall an' winter, tu pay for my land."

"Du you know any sech a place?" the young man asked.

"Lord bless ye, dozens on 'em, on the Great Otter, an' the Little Otter, an' on the Lewis Creek, acres an' acres, flat as this 'ere floor, an' where you hafter hunt half a day tu find tew stuns tu crack a but'nut."

"It's a turrible ways off, hain't it?" the young man asked, his eyes wistfully following the trim figure of the landlord's daughter, who now entered the room and traversed the length of it in quest of her father, who was busy at the fireplace, heating the loggerhead for the concoction of two fresh

mugs of flip. Her hair was red gold, her cheeks red roses, and her eyes of violet blue, wherewith she cast a bewitching glance on the young man, as she passed, and bestowed a nod of her pretty head.

“Lord, she’s a pooty one!” the hunter remarked in unfeigned admiration. “Naow, if you could get her tu jine ye, boy, in makin’ a pitch up there, you’d be fixed, complete.”

He drained the stale, remaining drops from his mug, and his companion, noting his unslaked thirst, ordered a replenishing of the mugs with a further purpose of covering his blushing confusion.

“Why, yes,” the ranger resumed, waiting thirstily with watery mouth, “the maouths of them streams is a good ways off, but the Great Otter head’s nigher, not fur from the West River, which, an’ it, was a main part o’ the ol’ Injun Road. Look a’ here,” he drew from his pocket a flat powderhorn engraved in black outlines with a rude map of Champlain and its tributaries, “it is daown in the flat country nigh the lake, but where you want to go is near the

mouth of the Little Otter, or the Lewis, where the' 's better farm land and trappin' ground."

The clerical looking stranger pricked his ears at these names, and clearing his throat to call attention, said blandly, addressing the younger man: "My young friend, if you have an idea of going into the new country, as your friend so wisely advises, I think I can help you to the very place you want." Thereupon he drew a map from his pocket and spread it upon the table. It was a plotted map of a township in the New Hampshire Grants, showing every numbered lot and the course of the streams.

"There," said the stranger, laying his finger on a lot between the mouths of two small rivers where they entered the lake, "there's a lot 'at I've took on a debt an' can sell dog cheap for cash, an' it's exactly what you want for the purpose your friend here is a-speakin' of. Just look at it, a-lay-in' on two rivers, with a mill seat on' both of 'em in it, an' trappin' an' fishin' right tu your door."

"It does look temptin'," said the old

ranger, studying it attentively, — “but I can’t seem tu remember no falls so low down on the Little Otter or the Lewis, ary one. Was you ever there, stranger?”

The landlord now came with the foaming mugs diffusing a pungent fragrance of beer and spirit as he set them before his guests, and gave them a finishing touch of creaminess with a sizzling plunge of the jointed loggerhead.

“Buyin’ of ye a right o’ land up in the Hampshire Grants, Josier?” he asked, glancing down at the map.

“Wal, a-thinkin’ on ’t some,” the young man replied.

“A good idee, for a young feller,” said the landlord encouragingly. “Jest what I’d du if I was your age, bein’ the ’s no gre’t chance here in the old settlements. Mr. Capron, here, ’s jest come from up that way — he can tell ye all abaout it. Mr. Capron, this ’ere ’s my young neighbor, Josier Hill, an’ this is Kenhelm Dalrymple, one o’ Major Rogers’ Rangers in the ol’ war.”

“Hope I see you, gentlemen, an’ here ’s

to our better acquaintance." He touched the glass to his lips and the others responded in the same manner.

"I've scaouted the country all over by land an' water an' I disremember falls on any stream wi'in three mild o' the lake. Hev you been there, Mr. Capron?"

"Candidly, I hain't, but a friend o' mine has, and I depend as much on his account as if I'd seen it."

"Wal, it don't make no diff'rence abaout the mill seats. Josier don't want none."

Capron resumed: "In a-trav'lin' through this vale o' tears if one can give a helpin' hand tu a feller mortal he helps hisself, sort o' boosts both, so to speak—which is what I want to do for our young friend and myself."

"Be you a minister, Mr. Capron?" Josiah asked, looking at him with the suspicion of an ungodly person.

"I am not, but I hope, a humble follower in the footsteps of the Master," said Mr. Capron, dropping his eyelids and looking meek.

"Hear the damned wolf in black sheep's clothing!" said a florid, fair-haired giant

who was drinking all that was good for him at a neighboring table, with the drunken hatter and a handsome, dark-haired young man for his companions. "If the Master caught him a-follerin' him, he'd kick him so high he could hear the Apostles sneeze."

"That big feller over there," the landlord whispered, pointing to the trio, "is a-takin' up lots o' land in the Grants, him an' his brothers. That han'some little chap's one on 'em: Stub Allen, they call him. T' other one is ol' Ethan, a reg'lar ol' war-hoss, 'at fears neither God, man, or devil."

"All 'raound my hat I wears the green willer," the hatter howled in a high falsetto, that cracked and fell in a ruin of rumbling bass.

"H-s-s-sh!" the handsome brother cautioned with a sidewise toss of his curly pate toward the landlord.

"'S my hat! I made it, 'n' I'll wear willer on er hat 'f I min' ter, 'n' I'll sing 'bout 'em 'f I min' ter!" the hatter hic-coughed, glaring savagely into space.

"That damned fool of a hatter is drunk ag'in," the landlord remarked sorrowfully.

"I 'll hafter send him hum tu rights. Say, Bellows," to the brawny blacksmith, "can't you coax Felt home? He's full enough."

"Oh, yes, I can coax him," the smith said, rising and going across to the little hatter. "Come, Felt, it's time you an' me was tu hum. Come!"

"Mr. Felt-hat is my guest, and he'll go home when he and I please," the flaxen-haired giant roared.

"But his wife's a-waitin' for him, Mr. Allen," the blacksmith urged mildly, but with a dangerous glitter in his cavernous black eyes.

"Captain Allen, if you please," the giant amended his title.

"Beg pardon, Capt'in Allen. His wife'll be oneasy abaout him."

"Oh, well, that alters the case — the ladies must always be considered," said the placated giant. "Let me assist you, old Hammer-and-Anvil." So saying, he picked up the little hatter and flung him across the blacksmith's shoulder, where he hung limply, dangling arms and legs as the smith bore him away amid the cheers of the others.

The company now began to disperse, some perhaps hurried by the example of the poor hatter, others having no need of it. To whatever sort the fair giant belonged, he arose from his seat, towering above all others.

“Come, Stub, they’ve broke our trinity, so le’s go tu bed — when I’ve pronouned the benediction.” Then spreading out his brawny hands on a level with most heads, “The blessing of the Great Jehovah be upon this goodly company and upon this house — even unto that clerical gentleman over there, and especially upon all the Lord’s anointed who intend going up into the wilderness to make it blossom like the rose.”

“I’m no minister, Captain Allen, but a lawyer,” said Capron.

“Ah, indeed, a scribe, not a Pharisee,” said Allen. “Good - night, gentlemen. Come on, Stub,” and with that took up a candle, and followed by his brother, strode away with a tread that made all the glasses ring.

“Now we’re more by ourselves,” said

Capron, looking around the almost empty room with its clouds of wavering smoke and the unsnuffed candles gleaming dimly through them, "I 'll make you an offer. I 'll give you a deed o' this right o' land for ten pound, the balance of fifteen pound to be paid in three notes on long time, to make it easy for you. If I was n't in need of money, I would n't make sech a sacrifice. What do you say, Mr. Hill ?"

"A pooty good chance," Dalrymple said, looking at Josiah, "'n' if you 're a mind' ter take it, I 'll go 'long wi' ye, an' help ye build a log haouse, an' go snucks wi' ye on trappin', for the sake o' hevin' company an' a place tu stay. Naow, what d 'ye say ?"

"I'll let ye know in ten minutes," said Josiah, after a few minutes pondering. "Is Mistress Chloe in the kitchen, Mr. Jarvis ?" he asked the landlord, and upon an affirmative answer, arose and went out to the kitchen, where he found the buxom Chloe taking a final oversight of her finished labors.

"Why, Josier Hill!" she said, with an affectation of surprise, and a pout on her pretty lips that her smiling eyes belied, "I

reckoned you wa'n't goin' tu gi' me a word this night, you was so took up wi' them hateful ol' men an' your flip. That han'-some Mr. Allen had more looks for me 'an what you had. My! hain't his eyes black, though!"

"Never you heed 'em, Chloe, they don't mean you no good," he said, taking both her hands in his and looking down at her with tender seriousness. "I hev got a word for ye, in sober airnest, an' I'll say it right naow wi'out no beatin' 'raound the bush."

"Law, Josier, you 'most scare me, you look so solemn."

"It's solemn business. I'm thinkin' o' goin' up int' the New Hampshire Grants, an' makin' a pitch. If I du, an' git a home made ready for ye, snug an' comf't'ble by a year from naow, will ye go an' share it wi' me? We've knowed each other since we was babies, an' hed ought tu know by naow whether we can stan' it together all aour lives. It won't be an easy life for a spell, but I'll du the best I can for ye, an' it'll go better arter a few years. It's a 'st'or'nary fine country up there, an' there's nothin' tu

be feared on naow but natur' an' wild beasts, sence the war's over an' the Injuns quilled. Gi' me an answer, Chloe, an' if it's yes, I'll go, an' if it's no, I'll go, but I don't want tu make no pitch. For God's sake, say yes, if you can."

"Law, Josier, you're so sudden I hain't no breath tu answer you," she gasped, pale as a lily.

"You've knowed all along 'at I wanted ye, an' you'd ort tu know by naow whether you'll hev me or no."

"A year, you say?"

"Yes, in a year I'll come for ye."

"Well, then, yes. You knowed I could n't say no when you as't. But it is an awful ways off to go, an' a lunsome life for a woman."

"It's lunsomer for a man all by hisself. I would n't never be lunsome wi' you."

"It's diff'nt wi' men. Well, it's a hull year fust, anyways!"

"Yes, an' I can du lots in a year, an' we'll be faithful an' true, Chloe."

"Faithful an' true, of course, we will, or leastways, I shall. There, you've taowsled

my hair till it looks as if the witches hed been in it. Good-night."

"Good-night."

Josiah's companions exchanged significant glances when he returned to them within the appointed time, his face calmly radiant, and announced, "It's a bargain, Mr. Capron, an' you may draw the writin's if you can show me a clear title."

Thereupon the lawyer produced a parchment duly conveying to him a certain right of land, from one of the original grantees of the township of Lakefield, on Lake Champlain, in his Majesty's Province of New Hampshire. This being apparently correct, the lawyer proceeded to make another deed to Josiah Hill, which was signed by him, Anthony Capron, and witnessed by the landlord and Kenelm Dalrymple, to be acknowledged next day before a magistrate.

"I conclude you've found you a pardner, Mr. Hill," Capron said slyly.

"Yes," Josiah answered, imperturbable, but for blushes. "Mr. Dalrymple here's a sort of a pardner."

Dalrymple took a final pull at his mug, and

then taking up the candle, after snuffing it with his fingers, sucked the fluctuating flame into his black pipe until the heel was well ignited, and said : —

“ Wal, seein’ aour business is all squared up, we might as well turn intu aour blankets. Good night, gentlemen.”

The hostler came in and blew out the candle in his tin lantern, and made up his bed in the bunk; the landlord carefully banked the coals in the fireplace; Josiah departed; the lawyer went to his room; the bar-room lapsed into silence and dim confusion of objects, as the flat cloud of tobacco smoke and the mixed fumes of the various liquors slowly drifted up the wide chimney.

CHAPTER II

THE WILDERNESS

JOSIAH HILL was up betimes next morning and presently engaged in preparations for his suddenly conceived plan of departure. The £10 were paid down, the deed acknowledged and in his possession, and Anthony Capron mounted his horse and rode away southward with a self-satisfied smile on his sanctimonious face. The Allen brothers rode northward on the way to their extensive purchases in the Grants, with which their fortunes were henceforth to be so intimately connected.

Josiah owned a yoke of oxen and a new cart, with which the journey was to be made, and the latter was now loaded with a barrel of pork and another of corn meal, blankets and bed-quilts, his own and the hunter's guns and traps, axes, a kettle and frying-pan, and such indispensable articles of back-

woods life. There was also a bountiful supply of cooked provisions for the long journey, — loaves of rye and Indian bread, baked pork and beans, and a bag of New England's staple luncheon, the well-beloved doughnut, whereof they were to see no more for many a month.

By the middle of the forenoon they were ready to set forth, good-bys were said, and with an interested audience of the greater part of the hamlet's population, they began the long, slow journey. The oxen swayed along the rough road ; the cart creaked with jolting over it, and the two adventurers, seated on a board laid across the cart body, turned their backs on homes and friends. From the last hilltop of the valley they looked back on smooth, green fields, snug homesteads, the winding river and its mills, the maple woodlands kindling with the first blaze of autumnal tints, and heaved a sigh of regret for all they were leaving behind.

Thus they passed out of Connecticut and into Massachusetts and across it, along traveled highways, through improved lands and by established homesteads, where shade

trees of second growth shaded door-yard and well and roadside, and brooks babbled through broad meadows in unbroken sunshine, and cattle grazed in grassy pastures — so old that the stumps and débris of the former forest were no longer seen. Every few miles they came to some village on a stream, with its sawmill and gristmill, its store and blacksmith's and cooper's shops, its tavern, with its hospitable sign and inviting roadside nearness. There was the meeting-house standing beside its increasing encampment of the dead — the green tents where the pioneers of the wilderness, the old Indian fighters and advance guard of the peaceful army of invasion, slept the long, dreamless sleep, with many of the generation that came after them to reap where they had sown. Sometimes the travelers stopped for the night at a hospitable farmhouse, sometimes at a wayside inn — always welcome at either, with their budget of news from the lower country, which became fresher and rarer the further carried.

Gradually the oxen crept toward the verge of the forest and dragged the red cart into

the broad belt of scattered new farms, separated by increasing miles of forests and stretches of road, always growing worse with deep ruts, quagmires, and ruinous bridges. So they came to a fortified block-house, an outpost of the old frontier, and rude memorial of the days of constant peril and frequent alarm. They came to poorer nightly quarters in one-roomed loghouses, and at last to camping in or under the body of the cart by outdoor fires, and so, by degrees, passed out of civilization into the wild, rude life of the pioneer.

Once in the dusk of nightfall they reached a straggling hamlet and were searching for its inn, when the tired oxen started at some object near a house. Looking for the cause, the travelers saw a great panther standing on a cross-piece at the top of a post and knew that this was the famous Catamount Tavern of Landlord Fay, at Bennington, the headquarters of the Green Mountain Boys, whose fame was already extending beyond the borders of the infant commonwealth. Great beams of light stretched out from the windows of the cheerful bar-room athwart the

road and faded out in the gloom of the opposite field, save where one maple's scarlet and yellow foliage caught the full glare and glowed like a tower of fire. Here a company of a dozen stalwart men were gathered, smoking, drinking, and chatting, who desisted a moment to regard the two travelers as they entered. Conspicuous among the company was the burly figure of Ethan Allen, standing with his back to the fireplace and discoursing fluently upon whatever topic came uppermost.

"Ah!" he cried, glaring at the newcomers as they conferred with Landlord Fay concerning the disposal of their team, "two more recruits for the army of the Lord. And where might you be bound, my friends?"

"As far as the Little Otter, nigh the lake," Dalrymple answered, setting his rifle with Josiah's in a corner, where they underwent inspection by many lovers of guns.

"That's right," said Allen. "Settle on the streams; they're the first paths of the wilderness, an open way summer and winter, and we want to head off the Yorkers on all of them. Stub and I and One-Eyed

Tom, here," indicating a sedate gentleman, with a defective eye, who sat near him, "have kept that in mind, and we've made pitches twenty mile beyond you, on the Onion River. Perhaps we'll call some day as we are passing."

"You'll be welcome," said Kenelm and Josiah, in the same breath.

"You've taken your right under New Hampshire?" Allen asked, with a sudden, searching look.

"In course I have," said Josiah. "I guess ev'rybody aour way does that."

"Mostly," said the other; "but there be some that prays to the good Lord and the good devil, not knowing which hands they'll fall into; but you stick to the Lord's side, my friend, an' you'll come out top. If the Yorkers trouble you, let us know. Give me your names, please."

He wrote them down, with the name and number of their location, in a memorandum book, and turned away, to confer with two men of very noticeable yet very different appearance — one of commanding mien and stature, a calm, thoughtful, resolute face,

deliberate of movement; the other of medium height but muscular mould, and firm set features almost fierce in expression. The first was Seth Warner, the other Remember Baker, a kinsman of the Allens, both leaders in the opposition to New York claimants.

“Well, gentlemen,” said Allen, taking up a candle and leading the way, “let us go and sit in the judgment seat.” And therewith he and his colleagues left the bar-room and could be heard tramping up the stairs and into the afterward famous Council Chamber, while Kenelm and Josiah were left to eat their “tuckernuck” supper, with only the hostler and a couple of mugs of flip for their company.

In those primitive times it was no offense to the innholder nor shame to the traveler to carry his own provisions and eat them by the bar-room fire, and this was called “traveling tuckernuck,” a name that smacks of Indian origin, as the custom does of the practice of the red wayfarer, whose sole dependence was on his bag of no-cake, a parched, pounded corn, and his hunk of

dried venison, eked out by such game as he chanced to kill. Our travelers also adopted this plan a little later, when the old ranger would strike into the woods skirting the road and pick up a partridge or a wild pigeon.

When they set forth in the gray of the frosty morning there was no one else astir in the inn, but as they looked back the breeze moved the long tail of the panther on the signpost and gave the tawny monster a semblance of vigilant life as his white fangs gleamed out in the direction of the land of the enemy. The patient oxen swayed along their leisurely way, the men sometimes in the cart, sometimes plodding beside the team, or Kenelm flanked it in the wayside woods, with rifle ready for a shot at partridge or pigeon.

Now the road, seamed with ruts and laced with a network of gnarled roots, scarred and worn bare by hoofs, wheels, and rain, ran through a forest that looked as ancient as the world, its hoary moss-clad pillars rearing their branches above the decay and ruin of innumerable predecessors —

life perpetuating itself by death, as nature ever does, and as eternity makes itself unending. The clatter and rumble of the cart and the shouts of the driver echoed far along the palisaded thoroughfare with rebounding crash of reverberation, that overbore the tinkle of sylvan streams and rustle of wind-swept leaves, and scared the timid wood folk with unnatural noises.

Now there was a clatter of hoofs behind, and the two Allens came up, gave a word of cheer as they passed the crawling oxen, and went clattering and splashing out of sight and hearing with their lesser echoes. At noon our travelers came to a small clearing, crude and uncouth with the newness of its hewing from the wilderness, log heaps and stumps dotting the stubble of the recent crop and sharing the ground with the shocked corn. The bark-roofed loghouse had its primitive plumping-mill; a hollowed stump, spring pole and pestle. Its outdoor oven, like a mud beehive, gave them hospitable welcome through its open door to the wide fireplace to cook themselves a dinner, which was, in fact, shared by their enter-

tainers, while the oxen were made free to a full feed of unthreshed oats. Such was the hospitality of the olden time, sharing the little it had with every comer, and asking as freely as it gave.

Coming to no such friendly shelter at nightfall, Kenelm and Josiah made camp beside a brook, supplying themselves with a goodly store of firewood, for it was a dismal camp-ground. The wolves began a hideous concert all around them as the shadows of night descended upon the wilderness, and then, behind the black curtain, the wail of a panther rang as it stealthily circled about the firelit centre wherein the frightened oxen trembled and the sleepless travelers watched and fed their comforting companion, the fire.

So passed their days and nights, barren of incident almost to monotony, except for such slight mishaps as were common to pioneer travelers. One day a bear, shaggy, black and shining in autumnal pelage, slouched into the road before them, and, itself in a flurry of alarm at the unexpected encounter, frightened the oxen almost to an

overturn. While Josiah held the team steadfast, Kenelm ran forward and killed the brute with a well-aimed rifle-shot behind the shoulder, and then getting the oxen past it with some ado, they loaded it upon the cart and journeyed on with their trophy to the next frontier hamlet, where it was readily exchanged for some needed additions to their stores.

Anon, they heard the mellow baying of deep-mouthed hounds drawing near and nearer from the hills, and halted where a pond broke the many-colored expanse of forest on the left, when the hounds were closer than the melodious echoes of their voices. Standing alert with ready rifles, an antlered buck bounded into the space before them, and at the double report of the guns plunged headlong into the painted thicket, dyeing the crimson leaves redder with its blood. Then the gaunt, blue-mottled hounds came up and guarded the quarry so fiercely that the slayers were forced to stand off until the panting hunter came upon the scene, a sturdy man of the woods, who made fair division of the spoil, and added something

for the unstinted praise of his hounds, of which he assured them : —

“They ’ll foller anything from a painter down to a Yorker and a skunk, which be the meanest things in all my knowledge o’ man an’ natur’.” These were Peleg Sunderland and his hounds, which afterward became so famous in the hunting of Tories.

Toward the close of a sombre, half-rainy day, when there were no shadows in the woods, but a universal gloom, and the only light seemed to come from the yellow and crimson poplars and maples and fiery pepperidges, and when the dusk of evening descended and they had not found a suitable camp, a pack of wolves began trailing them, howling hungrily and calling reinforcements, until the road behind was dusky with the gathering throng. Josiah kept beside the oxen, quieting and encouraging them, while Dalrymple sat in the cart facing backward, with one rifle across his knees and the other in hand to keep the pack at bay should they become too threatening.

At the first slight opening where a brook babbled along its pebbly bed and spilled it-

self into pools over obstructing logs, Josiah stopped the team and plied his axe lustily to get firewood from a fallen tree. Then firing some punk with sparks from flint and steel, he soon had a cheerful blaze of splinters, and then a roaring fire that licked and tossed the overhanging boughs and drove darkness and shadow into the circling gloom. Kenelm, firing his rifles in quick succession into the thick of the pack where glaring eyeballs shone and white fangs gleamed hungrily, sent the gaunt brutes snarling and whining into the cover of darkness, all but three that were found lying stiff and stark in the road next morning, and were added to the trophies already in the cart.

Another evening, when similarly delayed in finding a camp, a panther prowled beside, sometimes seen in tawny glimpses or glare of baleful eyes, now the stealthy footsteps stirring the fallen leaves, now leaping a prostrate log, or unheard as its soft pads touched softer moss-clad trunks. Kenelm kept vigilant guard, afraid to shoot for fear of wounding, until a camping-place and fuel were reached, and the unwelcome attendant

slunk away, spitting angrily and then cater-wauling afar off.

“If we had that feller’s pelt for a sign, we’d get us a keg o’ rum an’ go tu keepin’ tavern on aour pitch,” said Kenelm.

“You’d sell tu me one day, an’ me tu you the next,” Josiah responded; “but I’d rather not keep tavern if I’d got tu git the sign.”

“You’ll git used tu all these ’ere varmint’s afore your year’s up, boy, an’ thank your stars they hain’t Injuns, which is the b’iled daown black salts o’ hell itself.”

One day as they were traveling along the forest-bordered road they saw a man moving slowly at some distance before them, carefully feeling his way with a staff. As they drew nearer he got cautiously out of the road and awaited their approach with closed eyes turned toward them.

“Good folks, be you goin’ so far as Manchester?” he whined dolorously.

“Yes, and beyond,” Kenelm answered.

“Wal, then, would n’t ye jest as lives let a poor blind man keep along wi’ ye fer company an’ guidin’? If ye will, I’ll ask the Lord tu bless ye, an’ I know He will.”

“Sartinly, an’ you can ride in the cart if you ’re a min’ tu,” said Kenelm, and helped him to mount, and in doing so noticed the butt of a pistol sticking from his pocket. “But what be you a-doin’ wi’ a pistil? I never heerd o’ blind folks shootin’.”

“Wal, I did n’t know but what I might, at elust quarters if any varmint tackled me, an’ it ’s sort o’ comp’ny. I could fire it if I got lost, an’ mebby fetch somebody ’fore I perished.”

“That is a good idee,” said Kenelm. “An’ haow come ye tu be on sech good terms wi’ the Lord ’at He hes ye sarve aout His blessin’s?”

“It ’s turrible lunsome in the dark, an’ I commune with Him in spirit for company.”

“That ’s another good idee, tu,” the old ranger said.

“Where be you cal’latin’ tu stay tu-night?” the blind man asked, after a little feeling of the things in the cart.

“It depends on where we git tu. Properly we shall camp somewheres.”

A gleam of satisfaction passed over the man’s face. “I ’m glad on ’t. I luffer

camp aout. The sight — I mean the feelin' an' smell an' noise of a camp-fire doos me good. An' you got pork in this 'ere barril?"

"Yes."

"An' Injun meal in that 'ere?"

"Yes."

"Gosh! Provisions enough tu keep a fam'ly all winter. An' them wolf-pelts wi' the baounty 'll fetch ye thirty Spanish dollars tu Manchester. Be they expectin' of ye there, any o' your folks?"

"No, we do' know a soul there," said Kenelm, who, happening suddenly to turn his averted face upon their new acquaintance, caught him regarding him with open eyes and a hungry, crafty expression upon his countenance, but feigned to take no notice of this.

They made camp early in the first suitable place they came to, and as they were preparing it Kenelm found an opportunity to whisper to Josiah: "We want tu keep a sharp eye on that feller; he hain't no more blind 'an we be!"

Having got a roaring fire started, they cooked and ate their supper, then spread blan-

kets and quilts underneath the tilted cart and crept into their beds. Kenelm Dalrymple feigned sleep, as did the stranger ; who, after being assured that their slumber was sound, cautiously crept from his bed and went out to the fire, where, watching through half-closed lids, Kenelm saw him examining the priming of his pistol, then placing the axe within reach, casting frequent stealthy, backward glances at the supposed sleepers, whose snores increased in volume. Now, as the scamp crouched again to make sure of flint and priming, Kenelm silently laid off the blankets, and crouching like a lynx for a leap, sprang at one bound upon the shoulders of the plotting thief, and bore him face down upon the earth.

In the sudden onset the pistol was fired, the harmless bullet scattering abroad a shower of ashes and embers. Kenelm wrenched it away, and tossed it over to Josiah, who now came forth wondering at all the sudden commotion.

“Fetch a rope an’ tie the devil’s hands,” Kenelm panted, sitting on his adversary to regain breath.

This done they bound him to a cartwheel, threw a blanket over him and resumed their own, and slept soundly. In the morning they dragged the shivering wretch to the fire, warmed him, fed him, and turned him out upon the road with a parting admonition from Kenelm: "Now, you skunk, go your ways, an' remember us for hevin' wrought a meracle on ye, in restorin' your sight. Don't seek us no more, for if you run acrost us ag'in, it's more 'n likely we 'd turn ye deaf an' dumb as well as blind."

Then they went their way, coming to Manchester, and to Socialborough, where they bade farewell to their kind and entered upon the long, lonely journey to the Little Otter.

Their route now lay for the most part along the banks of the Great Otter, now skirting long, silent flowing reaches, now noisy rapids and booming cataracts, here the gorgeous forest reflected branch for branch and leaf for leaf in the glassy water, except as otter or wild fowl broke it with an arrowy wake, there shattered into a thousand flecks of every color where the torn current stretched

down the long incline of rapids, or leaped in a white tumult of foam down a wall of rock, and sent far down the watery lane and far into the hushed forest the tremendous thunder of its plunge.

So without further adventure with beasts or men, they came to the Lower Falls of the Otter, called by the Waubanakees, Ne-tah-me-puntook-Peconktook, and here crossed on the gathered driftwood to the right bank, where they found one Pangborn established and preparing to build a sawmill, though he was in constant fear of the Yorkers, who held a claim here under a New York charter. He was to be their nearest neighbor, and they bade him good-by with a promise on the part of each to visit each other soon.

Next day they came to the Little Otter, and crossed it on a rude bridge at the chasm of the Lower Falls, where they found a Quaker surveyor, Timothy Rogers by name, who directed them to their pitch, though he doubted the validity of the title, he being proprietor's clerk and having no record of its sale to Anthony Capron.

“I ’m afeared somebody ’n other ’s b’en

a-playin' of thee a trick, young man," the old surveyor said, consulting a map which he spread upon a stump. "Thy lot, seventy-four, was drawed tu the right of Nicholas Delaplaine, an' I don't find 'at he 's sol' it tu anybody. Haowsomedever, thee can go on an' make betterments, an' I think Nicholas 'll allow thee what 's right for 'em. He 's a member 'mong Friends."

"This 'ere 's one o' your man's mill seats, Josier," said Kenelm, pointing to the white cataract roaring through the narrow gorge, "an' it hain't wi'in three mild o' your pitch, an' the one on Lewis hain't no nigher. That shows the critter 's a liar, tu begin with." With some misgivings they turned their backs upon the surveyor and the forest-muffled thunder of the falls, and made tedious progress over an abominable road toward their destination.

After a long search they found the corner tree marked on four sides with the numbers of the lots, among which was lot seventy-four, a low-lying parcel of land bordered by the marshes of two streams on two sides, and heavily timbered with pine, hemlock, and

many kinds of deciduous trees — all giants of the ancient days. They made a shelter for the night, turned the oxen loose to feed along the edge of the marsh, and then slept the heavy sleep of weariness after an accomplished labor.

CHAPTER III

HERMIT LIFE IN THE WOODS

NEXT day they searched for a suitable site for their cabin, and found it, indicated by the choice of some former hunter's camp beside a little creek, with a convenient landing for boats, and yet out of sight of the main stream, though but a little way from it.¹

They at once set to felling trees for their house ; cut the logs of proper length ; hauled them to the spot ; rolled them up ; notched them and set them in place ; cut a place for door and window ; split and hewed puncheons for floor and roof, and in a few days had a substantial house, all the crevices warmly chinked with moss and clay ; a stone fireplace at one end ; a one-posted bedstead in a corner with a luxurious bed of marsh grass and cedar twigs, distilling aromatic fragrance and inviting dreamless sleep.

¹ In 1860, the traces of their cabin, with its fireplace, were plain to be seen.

Pork barrel and meal barrel had their corner; there was a furnishing of rude table and stools, one for each and a third for a guest; hooks for the guns on the walls, and numerous wooden pegs, until at last everything was handy, comfortable, and rudely homelike.

Josiah's day-dreams added the presence of his fair-haired Chloe, and his heart beat quick at the thought of her longed-for coming. After the wooden hinged door was hung, with wooden latch lifted from outside by a string, and a wooden shutter of the same sort was in place, a shed was built for the oxen, a stack of marsh hay made beside it for winter use, and the pioneers looked forward without apprehension to the coming of the dreary months of snowbound solitude.

Now Josiah plied his axe to make a clearing, the log heaps were burned, the ashes stored for future potash-making, and a little rye scratched into the virgin soil for next year's crop. A thin fringe of the giant water maples was left along the shore dividing the three-acre clearing from the brown

marsh through which the sluggish channel curved its amber waterway. Here toward nightfall came wonderful flights of water-fowl innumerable, in countless flocks, making the air pulse with the vibrant whistle of pinions, and the splash and surge of alighting to feed and rest among the measureless acres of wild oats that bordered the channel. Then Kenelm would steal forth in the log canoe he had fashioned from one of his Majesty's pines, and fire a deadly shot into the unwary throng, whereupon followed a thunderous burst of uprising, and as this subsided the echoes of the solitary discharge rippled out in far-off waves of sound that beat against distant hills and wooded shores.

Often a deer fell to his bullets, and once a mighty moose, wallowing in the marsh to the fringe of lily-pads, was waylaid and killed, furnishing a winter's supply of wild beef, which was smoked and dried and stored in the low loft.

Besides such service, Kenelm was tending his traps every day all along the two streams, and far back into the wild forest, by blazed lines, where deadfalls were set for marten

and fisher and bear, so that before the first snows fell to whiten the steel-blue helmet of Camel's Hump — Tahwah-be-de-e-wadso — or grizzle the pine-clad crest of nearer Charlotta, the cabin walls were lined with the appropriated coats of every fur-bearer, from panther, bear, wolf, fox, down to the humble mink and muskrat.

“They ’ll turn us aou’ door, Josier,” he said, as he took account of stock, “if I don’t pack ’em aout tu the settlements when it comes snowshoein’.” And with that object in view he began making snowshoes and toboggan, for he was skilled in all such Indian craft.

Josiah did not look forward to this period of loneliness with very cheerful anticipation; the lonely, silent days when he should have no means of whiling away the slow hours but in cutting firewood, feeding the oxen and reading his two books, the Bible and Pilgrim’s Progress.

“’T ain’t nothin’,” said Kenelm, “an’ you ’ll be right as a trivet, an’ jest take solid comfort o’ life. Half a berril o’ pork, an’ as much meal, a charnber full o’ jerked

meat, an' a million acres o' firewood tu your door. I would n't ask no better, an' you can go in my place if you want to."

But the original plan seemed best, as Kenelm could best dispose of the peltry, and was the better woodsman for such a journey. So a little before Christmas he set forth on his snowshoes, hauling the toboggan load of choicest furs and provision of no-cake and jerked venison for the journey, and bearing a birch-bark letter to Chloe from her lover.

Betaking himself first to the frozen, snow-covered channel of Little Otter, then across to the Great Otter to Pangborn's, thence to the end of his journey by the Old Indian Road, whence in the bloody days of savage warfare many a marauding band of French and Indians had gone on its deadly errand, and returned with prisoners and plunder and ghastly trophies.

Josiah was not yet of the sort to take kindly to a solitary life, and the lonely days passed heavily, more heavily the long, lonely nights with no companionship but the fire and the leaping shadows it cast upon the corrugated walls, the image of a three-legged

stool stretching across the floor, climbing the logs and snatching at the crossbeams, with his own shadowy figure leaping and falling beside it, till both seemed grotesque, uncanny goblins dancing to the crackle and roar of the fire until it burned low and they faded out, then sprang to fitful life when a charred brand briefly flared with an expiring flame.

When he covered the coals and crept into his blankets and all the room was in gloom but the dull ashen glow on the hearth, the cheerfulest sound was the muffled bursting of a smothered coal, or simmer of the sappy backlog, or the faint clash of the stabled oxen's horns. With these were mingled the outer voices of the night; the sharp crack of the frost-strained trees, the moaning of the wind in the interminable forest, the bod-ing hoot of an owl, the howl of a hungry wolf, the creak of the snow under the stealthy tread of some night prowler.

Once in the dead of a still night such a sound culminated in a scratching ascent of the jutting corner logs and the claws of the intruder tore at the puncheon roof, be-

neath which hung a saddle of frozen venison. Then the stealthy footfalls crunched toward the chimney, were heard climbing it, and then long-drawn sniffs came muffled down its hollow. Josiah sprang from his bed, drew from it an armful of straw, hastily raked open the coals and threw it upon them. There was a puff of smoke, an upburst of flame to the chimney top, a gasping hiss of fright and menace, a scream of rage, a headlong plunge into the snow, and long-receding leaps faded into the silence, leaving nothing behind but an odor of singed hair. After that an armful of marsh hay was laid ready every night for a similar emergency.

Besides the time given to providing firewood, Josiah spent much of it in hollowing out sap troughs and making spouts for the coming spring sugar-making, and perfected himself in the art of snowshoe weaving, that he had learned of his comrade, and also practiced the art of wearing them. He made splint brooms of birch, and wooden bowls and spoons, and had pleasant fancies of the commendation his handiwork would receive from Chloe when she came to see it. At

times he was oppressed by fearful forebodings of mortal sickness and lonely death, and pictured to himself the horror of his returning comrade at finding him stiff and stark in the cold and desolate cabin. On such occasions of foreboding he found more comfort in his Bible than he had ever thought possible, and he made a vague resolution of joining Chloe's church when the opportunity was given him. Besides the comfort the one book gave, he found great lightening of weariness and loneliness in both volumes, and wished for but one other, and that was "Robinson Crusoe," in whose adventures and lonely life he imagined parallels to his own experience.

Once his next-door neighbor, Pangborn, and his son came to visit him, spending the night and part of the next day with him, and giving him some very old news from the southern settlements. The care of the oxen prevented his returning the neighborly call, which, if it enforced the sense of loneliness, also made him feel that he was not quite forsaken by his kind.

So the weeks passed until six were gone,

and then one day when the frozen lake was booming its plaint of long imprisonment, he heard a faint but nearer and less supernatural voice upon the creek, and looking out saw his home-coming friend briskly shuffling toward him on his snowshoes, trailing the well-laden toboggan behind him. There was great rejoicing and unfolding of news, and delivering of messages from friends; a brief, unsatisfying, complaining letter from Chloe, and consequent doubt and misgiving — not lessened when Kenelm said solemnly: —

“You don’t want tu set your heart tu much on women folks, ’cause they’re all more deceivin’ ’an the wind that blows. I know ’em all through, an’ they can’t fool me no more.”

“You don’t mean Chloë?”

“I don’t mean her no more ’n the rest on ’em — they ’ve all got tu be right’n under your eye tu be sure on ’em,” Kenelm responded bitterly, and continued, “The Widder Ballou give me her word afore we come away last fall, an’ wha’ d’ ye think? Wal, sir, I found her merried tu ol’ Deacon Weth-

erbee when I got back. She must ha' took up wi' him afore we was out o' sight on the road. But she 's the last ! ”

He began unpacking the tea, coffee, and sugar he had brought, and reported a handsome sum of money deposited in the Hartford bank from the sale of the fur. Josiah was disheartened, for he felt sure his love affair was going wrong, yet scorned to ask questions which showed lack of faith. He was glad when spring and sugar-making came to keep his hands busier and his thoughts from brooding on Chloe.

During the season of sugar-making Josiah became intimate with the Canada jays, impertinent thieves that they were ; they were company, and so were the friendly chickadees and nuthatches, and woodpeckers that bored the logs of the house for grubs and drummed on the resonant stick chimney, and he made friends with a solitary old crow, though they were likely to fall out after corn-planting. Bluebirds brought the color and song of heaven down to the clearing, and robins came, and blackbirds thronged the border of the marsh, where

open pools began to form, into which returning waterfowl dropped to rest and feed. Stumps, logs, and wintergreen-clad cradle knolls began to show above the snow. Partridges drummed far and near in the purpling woods. The snow and ice disappeared magically, the black mould of the clearing was laid bare, and the blue water of the creek shimmered in the sunlight down to the slumpy ice of the bay, and there were the sounds of running brooks, the crackling croak of frogs and trill of toads, and lo! the miracle of spring had wrought its magic transformation.

The luxury they won from the maples made a most acceptable addition to their monotonous fare. Josiah even attempted the manufacture of a pie from their precious stock of flour, with bear's grease for shortening, wild strawberries sweetened with maple sugar for filling, and was so far successful that they ate the interior with considerable relish, and had the crust left over to fill again.

Summer was upon them, with no end of work to do, and when they could least af-

ford it they both fell ill with fever and ague. One day they were burning with a consuming fire, the next shaking with chills that froze the marrow of their bones, and during both were barely able to crawl about to the most necessary tasks, though fortunately their ague fits came on alternate days.

During one June day when Kenelm lay shivering in all the blankets before a roasting fire, and Josiah was administering hot drinks of herbs and hemlock twigs, a figure darkened the door, and looking up they saw a tall Indian silently regarding them. He asked for food, and Josiah set cold johnny-cake and dried venison before him, whereof he partook, and departed as silently as he came.

Next day he returned, accompanied by an old squaw, and bringing a large salmon. The woman produced a package of dried red berries, giving out an aromatic odor like lemon peel. She called for liquor of some sort, and they brought out a quart bottle of hoarded New England rum. The Indian and squaw each took a drink from it to make room for the berries, which were then

added, with the result of producing a mixture which was liquid fire. When Josiah, whose ague fit was on, took a mouthful of it, it burned its way into his interior with such effect that the ague was banished from his body, and a few doses made him well again; and with Kenelm the effect was the same, though at first he swore the Indians had poisoned him out of revenge for his share in the Rogers raid. The Indian told them that a party of their people were salmon fishing at the Lower Falls of Sun-gah-nee-took, or Lewis Creek. Next day the pioneers went over to see the sport. Many women and children were all busy, some with bark nets at the weirs, others with curious wooden spears, others cleaning the fish, and others drying them on racks over smoking fires.

Next day half the Indians returned the visit, and were royally entertained, each with a spoonful of the prickly ash berry mixture, and a burned stomachful of moose meat and johnny-cake, and so became fast friends of the two white men, an alliance which soon proved most fortunate.

One day when the pioneers were hoeing their corn under the vigilant eye of Josiah's late friend, the crow, they descried two boats entering the creek from the bay, and the crews, being attracted by the new clearing, came to the landing and accosted the settlers. It was the party of a New York surveyor, engaged in locating New York grants. The official at once set up his Jacobstaff and proceeded to allot this pitch to a New York land speculator, and warned the present occupants off the premises, without compensation for their time, labors, and betterments.

The party swaggered up from the landing, and made as free with the house and its contents as if all belonged to them. One ransacked the loft and brought down dried venison to cook for the company. Another demanded flour, Indian meal not being good enough for such gentry. Old Kenelm fumed mightily, but discreetly withheld his hand from laying a cudgel about their shoulders.

"You fellows would best get out of this," the surveyor said, "for Captain Williams will be wanting to occupy his claim at once."

"Maybe the Green Mountain boys will have a word to say about that," said Josiah.

"To the devil with Allen and his scoundrels!" the other scoffed. "We'll have the whole crew hanged in a month. There is a reward out for the leaders."

"Ketchin' on 'em 's another story," said Josiah, and asked: "Haow big is your captain's claim?"

"A thousand acres, running north, your stealings being nigh the south line."

"That'll run int' the gov'nor's right o' five hundred acres."

"D—— your governor's right! He's got no right in this province!"

"Seein' the cap'n 's got so much he might leave us alone on this leetle patch."

"No; off you go, and that's all there is about it," quoth the inexorable official.

The pioneers were at their wits' end, and drew apart for a little consultation while the usurpers were busy with their cooking. The result was that Josiah slipped away, and was presently making his best speed toward the Indian camp. The unbidden guests took leisurely time with the meal furnished,

in part from their own stores and in part from such things as they chose of the settlers' provisions, every mouthful of which was begrudged them by old Kenelm, as he sat apart watching them out of the corners of his eyes in sullen silence.

Suddenly, as if they had stepped out of the gray shells of the tree trunks, a score of armed fantastic figures appeared on every side, and simultaneously announced their presence by a horrid discord of yells.

"What the devil!" exclaimed the surveyor, springing to his feet and dropping a choice tidbit of stolen moose tongue, while his party cowered in the corners and sought shelter behind the great jambs of the fireplace. "Who the devil are these Indians, and what do they want?" the surveyor asked of Kenelm when he recovered a little from his surprise.

"Injins!" the old ranger repeated in derision. "Why, man alive, they hain't nothin' but Green Mountain boys dressed up for business. They've got their faces daubed red an' black tu hide their featur's, bein' the' 's a baounty sot on 'em. If that

big feller's ol' Ethan, which I don't say he is or hain't, it would n't be pleasant for him tu hev you reco'nize him, and kerry him off tu Albany."

"D—— him, we 're not hunting outlaws, but only peaceably surveying!" said the surveyor.

"Sart'inly, but a hundred paound would come handy tu most anybody," Kenelm answered. "An' what they want, an' what we want, is for you an' your peaceable crew tu git aout o' these woods — an' that almighty sudden, tew!" he added, with startling emphasis. "Come, be makin' tracks, quick! and fur apart!" and he made a menacing movement.

The surveyor, with his attendants, got speedily out of doors, and made toward the boats, their huddled rank flanked and closely followed by the Indians, yelling and threatening, while Kenelm and Josiah could scarcely restrain from roughly handling the chopfallen Yorkers.

The boats were shoved off, and they were hustled into them, when Kenelm warned them to depart and return no more, under

pain of chastisement with the twigs of the wilderness, all of which was emphasized by whoops and screeches of the Indians and discharge of guns, the bullets whistling threateningly over the heads of the retreating enemy.

After watching them out of sight behind the first headland in the direction of the Forts, the allies returned to the cabin. Here they celebrated their bloodless victory in libations of fiery ague cure, a great spoonful to each, exhausting the stock to the red dregs, which were eked out to a milder potation by a replenishment of water, and the Waubanakees departed after renewed vows of eternal friendship.

CHAPTER IV

VISITORS

IT chanced on the next day, what they accounted a great piece of good luck came to the pioneers. They were out upon the bay to see if their late visitors were lingering about the shores, when their eyes were attracted to a strange object, adrift on the waters that were roughened by a stiff north-west wind.

“It’s an almighty big turkle!” Kenelm declared, as something very like a rounded back wallowed in a trough.

“It looks more like a buoy that’s gone adrift, for it shows red paint,” Josiah said, as the object was tossed on the crest of a wave, “only it don’t ride high enough.”

“Wal, you’ve got it nigher ’n I did,” the other said after close inspection, “for it’s a cask, sure as you live. Lord send it is some sort o’ sperits, for the Injuns hes drained us as dry as a paowder horn.”

The wish was granted, for liquor it was, and when they had taken it ashore and tested it, it proved to be a ten-gallon keg of brandy, perhaps a part of the stores or cargo of some French craft sunk off Le Rocher Fendu, and just now set afloat again by the breaking up of the wreck. At any rate it was of fine quality, ripe and mellow with age.

"That's good enough for the Commandant of Carrillon," said Josiah.

"Too good for Montcalm," Kenelm Dalrymple swore, for he had memories of Fort William Henry.

They made a secret hiding-place for their treasure in a hollow stump, for it was too precious liquor to be guzzled by their ever-thirsty Waubanakee friends.

Not many days later Josiah was fashioning a huge mortar out of an oak stump close by the end of the house by alternate burning and gouging. This was for a plumping mill, that, when complete, consisted of the mortar, a heavy pestle slung at the end of a spring pole, the butt of which was fastened in the logs of the house, and all with a view

to the coming corn crop. As he chipped away the wood or rekindled the fire and wet the edge of the slowly shaping mortar to keep it from burning, his ear caught the sound of footsteps of some large quadruped approaching along the footpath which ran inland to meet the thoroughfare that linked the scattered settlements together from Bennington to the Winooski. He wondered what visitor could now be coming, for he knew no deer or moose would approach so unhesitatingly, nor Broad and Bright, browsing the undergrowth and cropping the scant woods herbage, advance so regularly and rapidly.

He wondered no less when he saw a horseman emerge from the woods, a man of gigantic stature, whose figure and carriage at once struck him as familiar. But when the traveler called out, —

“Ho ! thou dweller in the wilderness, hast thou no welcome for the stranger within thy gates ?” the voice and the quaint phraseology left him no longer in doubt, and he hastened forward to give him greeting.

“Why, if it hain’t Colonel Ethan Allen, for all of this livin’ world. An’ haow be ye,

sir? By the Lord Harry, if I hain't glad tu see ye, and so 'll my pardner be. He's aout on the creek fishin' for aour dinner! 'Light an' come in, whilst I ta' keer o' your hoss."

Kenelm had an inborn and cultivated distaste for everything that bore the name of work, yet, in the free life of a hunter, trapper, and fisher, would endure far more exposure, privation, and greater strain of muscle, and never complain, than any regular employment entailed. A hail brought him in from his steady trolling up and down the channel, bringing with him the result of his two hours' fishing — a great, wide-backed, thick-fleshed pike.

"Why, the Lord bless us, if it hain't Colonel Allen, an' you du us praoud if it hain't gittin' lost brings you here, an' if you be lost, why, it's aour good luck," he cried, as he recognized the distinguished visitor, and inwardly thanked fortune for the means of entertainment which the lake had so timely provided.

In those days, not to have liquor in the house for the entertainment of a guest was

thought to be more disgraceful than to be without bread, and the hosts were truly grateful that they had this to offer their visitor, who, having tasted it, needed no pressing.

“Heaven be praised for preserving such good liquor from unworthy lips and undue dilution with water, and sending it for the refreshment of honest men,” he fervently said, as he smacked his lips over a second glass. “I shall be tempted to tarry long where the waters bring such bountiful fare to your door. I doubt if the ravens furnished Elijah such fish and such fine liquor.”

“You ’r’ more ’n welcome to ’bide as long as you please, colonel,” said Kenelm. “But what beats me is haow ye come tu find us if ye wanted tu, or why ye wanted tu.”

“I want to know every true man in the Grants, and see a way provided for his protection against the Yorkers. It is a wonder they have let you alone so long.”

“Oh, but we ’ve hed ’em !” said Kenelm, and he and Josiah told of their late encounter, to Allen’s great delight, especially as to the Indians being palmed off on the sur-

veyor's party as Green Mountain Boys. He instructed them to notify Pangborn if they were again molested, and assured them of protection, and that they must be ready to give like aid to others. But he told Josiah that he doubted whether his title was good, for he believed Capron to be a knave.

"However, I've a pretty good understanding with the old Quaker surveyor, Benjamin Ferris, and I think he can make things easy for you with Delaplaine, for he is a Quaker, too, and they stick together like — well — like Green Mountain Boys."

He spent the remainder of the day with them, and helped make half the night jovial, at which he was an exceedingly good hand, having no end of stories to tell and great capacity for strong drink. When he left them next morning, his fast friends for life, his head was the clearest of the three, though the one glass that furnished the board had gone fullest and oftenest to his lips.

It was a hot, hazy August day; the sun was a fiery, rayless ball in the brassy sky; some ripened water-maples in the marsh were blazing like steadfast flames in the

still air. A gray heron sagged on slow pinions in briefest flight to a more promising shallow where the minnows snapped lazily at flies resting on the rims of lily pads or darted away in sudden fright as an evil-looking gar pike swam into their retreat. A pike broke the glassy surface of the channel with a slow swirl of miniature whirlpools, boring the water in the widening arch of wavelets that subsided in the rustling sedges, and shook the blue spikes of pickerel weed. A brood of well-grown, full-fledged wood ducks flashed past, exultant in the new power of flight, racing with their quivering reflections. High above the cedar-crested cliff an eagle soared on noiseless wings, surveying his silent realm of wood and waters.

In the midst of the hot stagnation of air, Kenelm and Josiah moved languidly on the shorn marsh, gathering the rustling cocks of wild hay into stilted stacks that looked like exaggerations of the muskrat houses which were already built along the outer border of the marsh. Far up the creek there was an approaching clank and splash of oars, and presently a scow appeared,

manned by a full crew, two of whom were in the garb of Quakers, and one was at once recognized as their old chance acquaintance, the surveyor, the other a stranger of portly figure and benign countenance. When they met he was introduced as Nicholas Delaplaine. They were shown the canal-like approach to the shore and landing, and all went up to the house.

"I'd like to see thy deed," Delaplaine said to Josiah, who was growing sick at heart with a presentiment of trouble. "I'm afeard thee's been played a scurvy trick, for I never sold this to any one." Then he carefully examined the deed and pronounced it a fraud, as he could easily prove. "Thee's got about five acres cleared, and a good house and fine crops growing. It's too bad, but I don't want to be hard on thee for what is n't thy fault, except in lack of caution."

After some consideration he continued: "I'm going to propose to thee to give thee fifty pounds for what thee has done, or thee may give me fifty and keep the place, I giving thee a warrantee deed of it."

“That ’s fair, an’ I ’m obleeged tu ye, Mr. Delaplaine,” said Josiah ; “but I want you tu wait on me a month afore I give you an answer. I want time to go tu Connecticut an’ back afore I can tell which I ’ll do.”

“That thee may have and welcome, or longer if thee wishes,” said Nicholas.

Dinner was got for the party, after which they returned to the falls, Josiah going with them, after making hasty preparation for his long journey. Long and weary it was, with a bitter reward, for his faithless sweetheart was married and gone, so that he had not even the poor satisfaction of upbraiding her for breaking her troth.

One Septémber evening near the expiration of the month he made his appearance at the cabin, travel-worn and heartsick, all his hopes shattered, leaving him with no desire to keep his pitch.

“I thought she was sparked tu stay,” he said wearily, throwing himself upon the blankets, “but she jilted me, and of all the men in the world, you can’t guess for who !”

“No,” said Kenelm.

“For that d—— scoundrel Capron!” said Josiah. “Let the pitch go; I don’t care for it no more. Women is just as you said they was, Kenelm. The devil take ’em all but my mother!”

CHAPTER V

TICONDEROGA

JOSIAH disposed of his betterments to Delaplaine on the terms proposed, and sold his oxen and all his belongings but gun and traps. The two pioneers drifted out into the wilderness, homeless, yet at home wherever they chanced to be, now hunters and trappers, now attaching themselves to the Green Mountain Boys in their raids on the Yorkers and resistance to their encroachments, the most daring and reckless of their number, though without the cause and object of the permanent settlers, but through the love of adventure. Now drifting apart they lost sight of each other for months at a time.

Josiah was still tarrying, toward the middle of spring, at a settler's some miles above the lower falls of Great Otter, after spending the winter between working enough to

pay his board and trapping on his own account. He was hesitating between hiring out to the settler for the season and going down to the old colonies to take part in the events which were stirring the forming nation from its heart to its remotest extremities. It was not exalted patriotism that urged him to this, but what is so often mistaken for it, a desire for action and love for adventure, that the monotony of tilling virgin soil and every-day warfare with the giants of the forest could not satisfy.

He was impelled to leave the place by another and quite different motive. Charity Benham, the only daughter of the house of marriageable age, was impressed with the belief that her father ought to have a son-in-law, and to her mind there was no one whom she had seen who was so well fitted to fill the place as this sturdy young pioneer, but he seemed little inclined to mating. Yet Charity was tall, dark-eyed, dark-haired, good-tempered, and in all respects, save in being a notable housewife, so exactly the opposite to faithless Chloe that Josiah's pulses quickened when she cooed around

him, and warned him that he might forget his forswearing of all womankind.

If he resisted her blandishments, which it was plain to see her father and mother favored, it would be very embarrassing, and could only end in incurring the ill will of all. He was tired of wandering, and longed to rest a while in this comfortable harbor. Thus he was inwardly debating near noon one day in May as he cut firewood at the door; and John Benham and his son, Sam, just come in from the field, sat on a log idly watching his sturdy strokes, while all waited the serving of dinner. An appetizing smell of boiled pork and greens came out of the open door, wherein Charity presently appeared and bade them to the board.

“An’ I got tu tell ye, Mr. Hill,” she said, casting an admiring glance upon Josiah, “you be the cutest hand to gather caow-slops! Why, the’ wa’n’t nothin’ but clear leaves, an’ ’t wa’n’t nothin’ tu pick ’em over!”

“That’s the sort o’ man for ye tu git, Cherry!” cried her father, bestowing an impartial wink upon the two, under which

they blushed hotly. "You want tu jest freeze tu him, gal!"

"Why, Pop, hain't you 'shamed! Who on airth"— She suddenly checked her simpering to stare out upon the road, whither the eyes of the others followed hers, and saw a strong, lithe man approaching at a brisk swinging pace.

"Why, it is Major Beach, from Rutland way!" Benham exclaimed, going out to meet the traveler. "Haow be ye, major? You're jest in time for pot luck with us. Come right in."

"Not much time for me to eat or talk," said the other. Then lowering his voice, "Who is the tall chap you've got here? All right?"

"Josier Hill, ol' Dalrymple's pardner. Yes, he's true blue. What's up? Yorkers cuttin' up ag'in?"

"No; it's r'yal game this time. Nothin' less 'n the British lion in ol' Ti'. Ethan Allen takes the job. We meet tu the cove a mild north o' Ti', to-morrow arternoon."

John Benham's face grew very sober as he repeated the words, as if scarcely sure he

heard aright. "Take Ti' ! To-morrer night ? That 's mighty suddent, an' a ticklish job !"

"Why, I thought you was ready at a minute's notice ! They 've got you on the roll here," said Beach, running over a paper which he took from the pocket of the coat that hung on his arm. "But if you don't want to resk it, you 'd better stay tu hum wi' the women folks," he added with some scorn. Then turning to Josiah, from whom he had taken no pains to keep the secret after Benham's assurance, "How is it with you, my man ? Are you ready for a whack at ol' Ti' under Ethan Allen, along wi' over tew hundred good men ?"

"Yes, I be, an' 'll start wi' you naow," Josiah answered promptly.

"Why, sartinly, I cal'late tu go," Benham said in confusion, "but it come kinder suddent. Sartinly I 'll go, an' so 'll Sam."

"All right," cried Beach heartily. "An' naow gi' me that dinner quick, for I 've got to pull foot lively."

He swallowed his dinner so hastily that there was little news to be got out of him, and then was away again, to the disgust of

the mother and Charity, who thought him a most unsocial guest, not worth entertaining for what he gave in return. But to make sixty miles on foot that day left little time for talking.

A grand wolf hunt, a "surround" of a pack which had just been located, was the pretext given to the women for this grand turnout of armed men, and the good souls cheerfully spent the afternoon in cooking for the hunters.

Next morning these men set forth, Benham and his son armed with their long smoothbores, those handy guns which served equally well as fowling pieces or weapons of war; and Josiah with his favorite rifle, which he held to be the only proper arm for a man, and each carrying a blanket and two days' rations. Charity needs must have a tearful parting with Josiah, from which he withdrew with unlover-like haste, and was out upon the road before his companions.

"If ever you git him, you 'll hafter du all the sparkin'," said Hannah Benham, "for he's the chicken-heartedest grown-up man ever I see."

"He hain't nuther!" Charity cried resent-

fully. "He's as brave as a lion, an' I know the ugly creetur's 'll kill him as likely as not. Oh, dear!" and she gazed long after his tall figure, blurred and misty through tear-dimmed eyes.

The three volunteers trudged on at a brisk pace over the wretched roads, until they came to the better thoroughfare of Amherst's military road, from Number Four to the Champlain forts. Now and then they fell in with other armed men, singly and in squads, all bent on the same errand.

"Hello!" hailed one. "You goin' wolf-huntin' tew? Wal, they du say it's a lion arter all, an' like 'nough tu scratch an' bite if his tail is trod on."

A little past noon the company, gathering as it advanced, came to a famous camping-ground where a cool, clear spring bubbled out by the roadside and trickled through a cleared space. Here they halted for rest and refreshment, where many a company of rangers and redcoats and bands of painted Indians had made camp in the days of the old wars and savage forays, and left traces of their brief tarrying.

Then resuming their straggling march, they soon crossed the slow, muddy course of the oddly named Lemon Fair. Once they were challenged by a guard, posted on the thoroughfare to prevent tidings of the unusual movement being carried to the Forts. Toward nightfall they came to the rendezvous on the bank of a small creek. As they drew near they saw groups of men lounging in the lights of newly kindled camp-fires. Moving about among them, now dusky in shadow, now clearly revealed, the herculean figure of Ethan Allen; the no less commanding one of Seth Warner, and another restlessly alert, clad in a colonel's full uniform, which they afterward learned to be the brave, ambitious, unscrupulous and, later, infamous Benedict Arnold.

The fires shone out among the tree trunks upon the prows of a mixed flotilla of small craft drawn up on the shore or now and then on an incoming boat. Allen came out to meet the party, and discovering them to be his own people, gave them most cordial welcome.

“Ah, more of the chosen ones of Israel

come up to fight the battles of Jehovah, and smite his enemies hip and thigh!" Then recognizing Josiah, "And you, tall son of Anak, have you come up so far out of the wilderness to do battle? Well done, and better if you thought to bring a vessel of those strong waters of Gaul," he added, smacking his lips at recollection of the flotsam brandy. "And your old dried-up comrade — which way has the wind blown him?"

"I'm sorry, colonel," Josiah answered, shaking his hand, "him an' the brandy hain't nary one on 'em here where they're both needed. But ol' Kenelm would be, if he knowed."

"Well, come in to the fires and rest ye. You've got your grub with you, of course, an' maybe we can scare up an underjawful of honest New England rum, and that is better than lake water." With that he led them to a fire, in whose cheerful glow they stretched themselves.

On the eve of embarkation, the Green Mountain Boys were moved to an angry protest, from commander to the humblest private, against Arnold's attempt to assume

command of the whole force, by virtue of his commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety. When this claim was disposed of, half the troops, the boats being too few to transport more, were embarked and went forth silently into the darkness. Arriving on the western shore without mishap, they restlessly awaited the coming of the other half of the force. Their impatience grew with every moment when the eastern rim of the sky began to pale with the first light of dawn, and still no plash of oars broke the silence of the quiet waters.

Allen fretted and fumed, until at last he ordered the troops to fall in, in three ranks, and briefly set forth the danger of the complete failure of the enterprise if they waited longer to be joined by their comrades, and proposed that they should move forward at once. No one who disapproved was asked to go; those who followed him would poise their firelocks. Every rifle, musket, and smoothbore was slanted across its owner's breast, and the order to march was about to be given, when Arnold again made a violent assertion of his right to command. At the

suggestion by one of Allen's captains that the two should enter the fort together, the dispute was settled, when another brief interruption occurred. Some one discovered a dimly defined object approaching upon the lake, which from the morning mists presently took the form of a tiny canoe occupied by a solitary figure.

"Who goes there?" The challenge was given in a guarded voice, and the answer came back as guardedly.

"A friend wi'aout the caountersign; but maybe some on ye knows Kenelm Dalrymple!" A subdued murmur of applause arose from the column.

The old man ran the tiny craft upon the beach, explaining as he stepped ashore, "I jest got back from 'mongst the hills a-pickin' up my traps, an' never heard o' this job till noon yist-d'y. I would n't ha' missed it for a fortin." As he took a place in the ranks, and the column began to move, he continued his confidences in a whisper to the man beside him. "That 'ere milkweed pod won't kerry but one, so I jest put aout alone, an' here I be. The boats had n't but jest got

there when I started, an' the men was fairly b'ilin' for fear o' not gittin' acrost in time. That canew's one I had hid tu the head o' the cove sen' last fall's trappin', an' it come mighty handy, for I would n't 'a' missed hevin' a finger in this pie for a gov'nor's right o' land. This is the third time I've been ag'in' Ticonderoga; the first when Aunt Nabby Crumby run his pudden-head ag'in' it, an' a terrible mess he made on 't. Then when Amherst come sweepin' the French back intu Canerdy an' they blowed ap Carrillon afore aour face an' eyes. Lord! It jest rained forts for five minutes! An' not a scaout da'st go anigh for an haour! An' naow here I be ag'in, an' it's a-hopesin' we'll make a tidier job on 't."

The garrulous old ranger ceased his whispered reminiscences when the bastions of the fortress arose gray and silent before them in the faint light of dawn. Then there was the click of a musket lock missing fire, a swift advance of the column through the narrow wicket, until the last man was inside the walls. The troops, forming in two ranks on the parade, gave a lusty cheer, which

the barrack wall bandied back and forth in quick reverberation that brought the suddenly awakened British soldiers staring out of the windows.

The peremptory summons to surrender quickly followed, and Ticonderoga, its garrison and invaluable stores, passed bloodlessly into the possession of the Americans. Josiah Hill remained there for a time, a member of its insubordinate garrison, until upon the organization of the regiment of Green Mountain Boys he enlisted under Warner, and went to Canada. Thus he escaped the danger of falling a victim to the wiles of Charity Benham.

CHAPTER VI

LA CANADIENNE

WHEN Ethan Allen was dispatched on his mission of "preaching politics" to the Canadians, Josiah was detailed as one of his guards, and so chanced to be with him in the unfortunate attempt to capture Montreal. Major Brown failing unaccountably to coöperate with Allen, the latter was forced to surrender, but Josiah managed to slip away and secrete himself in a dry ditch, from which he saw Allen, attacked by a gigantic Indian, seize a British officer by the shoulders and swing him around as a shield between himself and his assailant until the latter was compelled to desist.

At nightfall Josiah made his way to the south shore and searched for a boat. Turning a shoulder of the shore, he came upon two Indians engaged in baling a canoe; their guns leaned against a tree at a little

distance behind them. He got between them and their arms ; and then, with his rifle cocked and aimed at them, demanded their surrender. There was nothing for them but to submit, which they did very sullenly. He placed the guns in the boat and set forth, making with all speed to a light on the other shore. The Indians ran yelling along the shore in quest of another boat to pursue him, but he had no further trouble from them ; and making the passage safely, after dropping the captured guns in midstream, he continued his retreat until daylight, making frequent detours from the bank of the Richelieu, which was his guide, to avoid houses, forts, and small detachments of troops which he now and then fell in with.

At dawn he secreted himself in the woods, where he lay all day, suffering hunger, thirst, and weariness, and frequent chance of discovery. At nightfall he ventured forth, and coming to a house made a reconnoissance through the window. There was no one in the room but a woman and a girl ; the table was set for supper, with a brown loaf, a piece of pork, and a bottle of whiskey en

esprit ; so, going to the door, he entered without ceremony, seized the eatables and the bottle and made off, while the frightened inmates shrunk into a corner, crossing themselves and calling on all the saints to protect them, and then uttering shrieks of alarm, which presently brought half a dozen jabbering habitants upon the scene and into speedy search for the bold Bostonais. Fortunately for him, they hunted in a pack, and kept up such a continual jabber that he easily eluded them. When at a safe distance he sat down and made a hearty meal, and then, refreshed by a draft of fiery liquor, he continued his perilous journey until daybreak, then lay by again till night.

Once, as he lay at dusk in a grainfield, one of a searching party actually stumbled over him, but before he could make an outcry Josiah was upon him, gagged and bound him, and wormed his way out of the field without discovery. Another time when he was reconnoitring a house in hope of getting food, he succeeded in getting the capote of the owner, which afforded him so good disguise that he joined a searching party on

his own pursuit, and got well on his way during the day.

“The holy Bostonais is more cunning than a fox,” said one of his pursuers with whom he came face to face. Josiah’s bad French betrayed him, and as the habitant hissed out a long-drawn “ah!” and opened his mouth to give the alarm, Josiah’s gun barrel crashed down upon his skull. Safety demanded that he should be given his quietus, but the Yankee’s heart was too tender yet for such outright murder, and he contented himself with taking his tobacco, pipe, and steel, which he was greatly in need of, and then, gagging his adversary, left him to recover his wits at leisure.

At last he came to where the Richelieu draws the waters of Champlain to its channel, and here he began searching for a craft of some sort. He found a pirogue drawn up on the shore, and was groping in and about it for a paddle, preparatory to launching it, and already was exulting in an easy escape by the open way of the lake, when his blood was turned to ice by a voice demanding in English, —

“Stand and surrender!”

He turned about and was confronted by a dozen armed men, who seemed to have arisen from the earth, so silently and suddenly had they appeared. He threw down his gun in vexation and despair at being taken just when deliverance was within his reach.

His captors now gathered about him, and he experienced as great a revulsion of emotions when he discovered in the dim light that they wore the green uniform of Warner's Rangers.

Explanations followed, and he was filled with disgust when he learned from the scouting party that St. Johns had surrendered, and that for all these anxious days and nights he had been dodging detachments of Americans and posts that were already in their hands.

Having thus rejoined his regiment, he served with it until the expiration of the term of enlistment, when he returned to the new commonwealth of Vermont.

Again Josiah went to Canada upon the urgent appeal of General Sullivan, then in

command there, to Seth Warner to come to his aid, but the arrival of an overwhelming force from England put an end to all offensive operations of the Americans, and a general retreat was ordered, when it became Warner's duty to cover the rear and bring off the sick and wounded.

One evening Josiah and a companion entered the house of a habitant, where they heard a soldier was lying sick. They found him, a handsome young fellow, in the languor of convalescence, assiduously tended by a pretty daughter of the house, with something more than sympathy in her black eyes, and telltale blushes that glowed in her dusky cheeks when she was caught in the act of smoothing the flaxen hair from the pale forehead of her patient. A motherly old dame was laboriously bending her fat form over the fireplace, busy with a kettle of pea soup, and only turned her head without straightening her body when the strangers entered.

“Good-evelin’, zhonte-mans,” she gave greeting. “Si’ do’n, si’ do’n, ’f you please. Mathilde, gif de zhonte-mans some chair,”

and the daughter set two splint-bottomed chairs by the fireside.

“Thank ye,” said Josiah, moving toward the pallet where the sick man lay, and looking him over with a scrutinizing glance. “We come tu git this ’ere chap. Hain’t he bothered ye ’bout long ’nough? Well, bub, be you able tu travel towards hum?”

“Oh, I guess so,” said the young soldier, rising with alacrity at the name of home, but as he arose to his feet he tottered and sank back to a sitting posture. “But,” he added, with a faint smile on his half-scared face, “I don’t ’pear tu be very stiddy on my pins just yit.”

“Oh, we ’ll give ye a lift on a litter — me an’ Sam,” said Josiah cheerfully. “Sam, you go aout an’ knock up some sort of a contraption — a couple o’ saplin’s wi’ some cross-pieces.”

“Oh, he too seek for go,” the girl plead anxiously. “’F you lef’ it ’ere, we took good care of it, me an’ mah mère.”

“I hain’t no daoubt on ’t,” Josiah said significantly, as he looked at her eager face, “but the Britishers ’ll be along ter rights,

an' if they got a holt on him, I do' know ; hangin' mebby, prison anyhaow, an' that will mean dyin', the way he is. No, he'll haf tu try runnin'."

"Yes, me guess so — if dey goin' keel it," the girl assented. "Oh, mon pauvre ami!" She gave the soldier a tender helping hand to don his tattered coat, as ready now to speed his parting as she had been to delay it.

"You goin' heet some souper 'fore you gone," said the mother, ladling out the soup into bowls and setting them on the table with a brown loaf. "De Bostonais is always ongry," she laughed, as Josiah, without ceremony, drew his chair to the board. "Oh, jus' one tam 'go me an Mathilde was make ready de souper an' wait for mah hol' mans, an' dey come in one grand Bostonais an' 'ee took hoff de bread, de lard, an' de boutelle whiskey en esprit. Whoof! an' way 'ee go! Ah wish me haf de whiskey for you, mais 'ee take all! Ah 'ope it choke it, me!"

Josiah bent a guilty face over his bowl, and knew now why the room looked familiar.

“Me goin’ gat boy for he’p you carry it,” said Mathilde, leaving the table and slipping out.

Presently Josiah and his comrade brought in the rude litter, upon which the sick soldier took his place, after a folded blanket was spread on it. The soldiers laid their guns beside the sick man and set forth in the dusk along the highway.

The white fleeced rapids rushed past them like a flock of frightened sheep, with a continuous musical clamor, swelling and falling with the waft of night wind. When they had gone half a mile a swift patter of moccasined feet came behind them, and they were overtaken by a boy, of apparently about sixteen years, bearing a brown loaf under his arm.

“Me come for he’p carry,” he panted, out of breath with running, as he came up to the litter, and looked anxiously down at the face of the occupant, showing white in the fading twilight.

“You can’t carry nothin’,” Josiah said good-naturedly, as he scanned the slight figure.

“Yas, yas! Me strong lak leetly hosses,” said the boy eagerly, and persisted in taking the tall man’s place, and bearing his burden manfully with an easy swing over the rough places, often asking their charge if he was tired or at ease, or thirsty or hungry — always as gentle and tender as a woman. “Mathilde send me,” he explained. “He ma cousin. Ma nem Pierre.”

“Matildy never come anigh tu bid me good-by,” said the sick man, with a peevish tone in his voice. “It’s kinder cur’ous she did n’t, for she’s nussed me mighty keerful. I guess I’d ha’ kicked th’ bucket if it hed n’t b’en for her. She’s a good little gal.” The head of the litter shook perceptibly.

“What was dat — keek de bucket?” Pierre asked.

“Oh, that’s Yankee for dyin’,” said Dick Wheeler, the sick man.

“Oh, you mus’ never keek to die. Mathilde, ma cousin, not want you.”

“Sho!” Josiah exclaimed contemptuously. “Your Matildy’s a-makin’ love tu

some new pea-souper by naow. Come, boys, gi' me a-holt o' them handles — you 're a-gittin' tuckered."

"No, no! It is not so wid de Canadienne," said Pierre hotly. "It may be wid de woman of de Bostonais, but de Canadienne never forgot hees frien'. No. Yas, you may took de hol', an' Ah will go for de lait for M'sieu' Dick," and so he ran to a house to beg milk in a little pail he had brought.

"A cur'ous leetle cuss, tu be a-lookin' aout so for you, Dick," said Josiah. "Was he a-carin' for you much whilst you was with them folks?"

"Never see him afore," said Dick.

"Dey was hol' hugly," said Pierre, returning with a brimming and foaming pail. "W'en Ah ask, dey will not gif de lait, an' Ah ask de vache — cow, you call it, dat gif de lait? He was not riffuse."

"So you hooked it?" Josiah asked.

"It was for de cow to hook, mais he did not, he haf pity for M'sieu' Dick," said Pierre. "And shall he not sleep in the houses this night?" Whether they would

or not, Pierre would hear to nothing but that the sick man should have the shelter of a roof, and found it for him in the cabin of a friendly habitant.

Next day they fell in with a detachment of the retreating army, and with more help made more rapid progress. Josiah insisted that the boy should now go back to his people, but Pierre was determined to go on, saying that Mathilde's instructions were that he should accompany the sick man until he was safely embarked on the lake.

When this was accomplished he did not go back, but took his place in the bateau beside the sick man, ministering to his slightest want, and holding a bough over his face to shade it from the glaring sun, which shone down fiercely from the cloudless June sky upon the unprotected invalid, whom the cool, green shores and the sparkling water seemed to mock as they voyaged wearily onward toward Crown Point.

One evening, as they landed on an island for the night's encampment, there arose a sudden alarm of "A man overboard!" and Josiah, being near at hand, plunged in to

rescue him. He seized him by the hair and swam to the shore, which being gained he discovered that it was the boy Pierre whom he had rescued, lying now insensible across his knees. He unbuttoned the rough woolen jacket and stripped open the coarse tow shirt, and to his amazement uncovered the rounded breast of a girl. He covered it as quickly, and, pouring a spoonful of rum into the pale, set lips, soon saw the closed lids quiver and the black eyes open in questioning wonder.

“I wish’t I could send ye back, you little fool,” he said, in keen vexation.

“Ah, do not, ma frien’,” the other whispered. “Ah shall keek de bucket if I haf not heem!”

Next day, in the boat, Dick lying with closed eyes heard a voice over him in accents of love, “Ah, mon pauvre ami!”

“Why!” he cried, staring wildly into the face of Pierre bent close to his own, “I’d hev swore I heard Matildy speakin’ tu me!”

“Oui, mon cher, it is Mathilde. Do not be hangry of me. Do not tell de peop’ — dey will shame me. Ah can’t lif if I have not you always.”

The retreating army had been a week at Crown Point in the stricken camp where Colonel Trumbull said he did not enter a tent or poor shelter of boughs that he did not find therein a dead or dying soldier, when one morning at roll call Private Richard Wheeler was reported missing.

“Dick Wheeler’s desarted,” said a soldier to Josiah an hour later. “An’ that ’ere Canuck boy ’at’s allus a-hangin’ ’raound him, he’s gone tew.”

“Nat’rally,” said Josiah laconically, and musing to himself. “All women hain’t jest alike, for all Kenelm says so. If Dick don’t merry that gal, I’ll shoot him, by the Lord Harry! though as a ginerall rule I’m ag’in’ mixin’ breeds.”

CHAPTER VII

DALRYMPLE, THE SCOUT

IN those summer days Ticonderoga's ceaseless chime of rapids and waterfall was overborne by the sounds of saw, axe, and hammer, and the shouts of teamsters. Every energy was strained for the completion of vessels to oppose the British naval force, concerning whose coming continual alarming rumors came from the northward. Gondola and galley were finished while the wood yet exhaled the breath of the forest and mingled its sweating sap with the waters of the lake, and the lopped bough was scarcely withered before its place was taken by tapering yard and swelling sail.

Seamen then came drifting inland — rough old sea dogs who had been burned by the tropical suns and salted in all the seas, profanely contemptuous of such craft and the tame water that floated them, and look-

ing upon this service as a sort of paid holiday. Arnold's masterful personality dominated and held in check these half-mutinuous crews, as it directed all the operations of construction and preparation.

One day as Josiah was idly watching the vessels getting guns and ammunition on board and making ready for speedy departure, a hand was laid familiarly on his shoulder; and turning at the touch, he was surprised by the weather-beaten face of his old comrade, Kenelm Dalrymple, smiling up at him with more than the gladness of friendship at the meeting.

"Wal, boy, you're jest the one I was a-wantin', an' yet not expectin' tu find, for I did n't know you was in these parts. They're a-sendin' me off as a scaout tu see what them Britishers is up tu, an' haow many water craft they muster. I telled aour General, or Commodore, Arnil, I do' know which he is, 'at Josier Hill was the man I wanted for my comrade, an' Colonel Warner cal'lated you was somewheres 'raound, though he hed n't see'd ye sen your 'listment run aout. Come along where they be, an' they'll give us marchin' orders, tu rights."

Kenelm's anticipations were at once realized, and the afternoon was not spent before he and his comrade were embarked in a birch canoe and briskly plying their paddles down the lake. At dark they encamped awhile for supper and rest at the mouth of Otter Creek, a much-used halting place for warriors and hunters from time immemorial.

The night being clear and moonlit, they prepared to resume their voyage, as it was important that they should get the desired information as early as possible. As they were about to step into the canoe, Josiah's quick ear caught the sound of a suppressed human voice, and stealing across to the rocky cedar-grown shore, and peering cautiously through the branches, he saw a canoe approaching, occupied by two men. He crept back to his comrade, communicated his discovery, and the two secreted themselves at a point where the canoe would probably land, or certainly pass very near. This it did in a moment, and the two arising into full view, with rifles cocked and covering the canoemen with deadly aim, Kenelm called, "Come ashore and surrender!"

There was a moment of silent surprise and suspended paddling, then a sullen grunt, and the prow was turned shoreward, and with one sweep of the paddles the canoe lightly touched the shore. The two Indians stepped out under cover of Kenelm's rifle, and Josiah bound their hands behind them.

"Waubanakee?" Kenelm asked.

"Euhhohh," one answered laconically, and Kenelm, knowing something of the language, asked how many English vessels there were. "Fifty," was the answer. "And more men than I can count."

"That's a lie, tu begin with," Kenelm commented in English. "We sha'n't get nothin' aout o' these chaps, an' might as well knock 'em in the head an' go 'long."

But Josiah was not yet educated up to this summary method of disposing of prisoners, and they compromised on binding them, taking their guns, and leaving them here until their own return, which, if all was well, would not be long delayed. The prisoners followed them with sullen eyes until they disappeared in the dim light.

At daybreak the scouts were far down the lake. Landing on a rocky point, Josiah climbed a tall tree, from which he discovered the sails of the advancing British fleet — the white sails slowly rising like clouds above the blue line of the horizon, then the black hulls like islands suddenly born of the lake. He could make out the great leviathan of a rideau, or floating battery, creeping nearer with sweep and sail.

“Sir Guy Carleton’s the head o’ the hul consarn, so they say,” Kenelm remarked, as they watched the advancing fleet, “an’ I da’ say the’ ’s a dozen Sir Somebodies aboard o’ them vessels. They’re thicker ’n mosquitoes in a swamp over in the ol’ country. Say, Josi, did ye know ’t I jest missed a-bein’ one on ’em?” he asked suddenly, breaking a silence of abstracted musing.

“You!” Josiah ejaculated incredulously, staring at the roughly clad, weather-beaten little man. But the brown face was quite serious, except for a twinkle of amusement in the eyes.

“Odd, hain’t it? But true, as nigh as I can cal’late.”

“ I sh’d think you ’d orter know for sartin whether ’r no ’t is or ’t ain’t,” Josiah remarked.

“ But I don’t — not sartin,” the old ranger answered. “ I’ll tell ye all I du know when we get afloat.” And when they had resumed their paddles he began his story.

“ The fust thing I remember was a-bein’ tossed in a ship, I s’pose it was, a’most forever on no end o’ water, an’ comin’ at last tu haousen an’ folks on land ; an’ then o’ goin’ ag’in on smoothe water a long ways, wi’ woods, woods on ary side, till bimeby I waked up one mornin’ ’mongst odd-lookin’ men, feathered an’ painted, an’ as odd-lookin’ red women in blankets o’ blue an’ red. I was mighty feared on ’em all at fust, but got used tu ’em arter a spell, an’ tu not seein’ sca’cely a white face, but one tall, sober, quiet man ’at I come tu know was my father.

“ Naow an’ ag’in he ’d be gone for days an’ days, an’ me left in a big log haouse wi’ a good-lookin’ red woman takin’ keer o’ me, an’ me a-playin’ wi’ little red boys an’ gals, an’ l’arnin’ tu talk their lingo, an’ all

their ways in the woods — sneakin' ontu squirrels an' pa'tridges an' ducks sly as foxes, an' shootin' 'em wi' bow arrers. That 's all I remember o' my start in life, an' I come to know it was in a Mohawk taown my father an' me was livin'. So it run along till I was six year ol' mebbby, an' a reg'lar leetle Injin as any on 'em, an' one day a party o' painted Injins come bringin' my father tu his haouse on a litter, sore wounded an' at the p'int o' death, an' my squaw mammy a-cryin' an' takin' on over him. He lay mighty still, mostly, an' kep' me clus tu him, an' one day he says, 'My poor lad, I must go an' leave thee, I'm afeerd,' an' he gi' me a package o' papers sewed up in a buckskin bag, an' a leetle pictur' of a woman 'at he tol' me was my mother, an' tol' me tu keep 'em all safe whatever come. The papers I lost or they was stole ; the pictur' I'll show ye fust place we land.

“Wal, my father, he died pooty soon, an' left me a lone, lorn leetle chap as ever you see. Arter a spell the' was a lawyer man come up from Albany an' took me back

along wi' him, an' I was livin' comf'table as I could ask, 'cept goin' tu school, which I did n't like. Next I knowed I was nabbed one evenin' by some o' my ol' Mohawk friends an' carried off tu their taown; an' then I was hustled raoun, hither an' yon, naow huntin', naow fightin'.

“Then I drifted intu Conne't'cut an' the Bay Colony, an' tried tu stiddy daown tu white folks's life, but it wa'n't no use. It was huntin' or trappin' or scaoutin', till at last I was in Rogers' Rangers an' 'long wi' Nabby Crumbie's big army tu Lake George. The' was lots happened betwixt, but nothin' tu du wi' this story. The' was no eend o' sirs an' lords in thet army, an' the best on 'em all was Lord Howe, who was the raal head an' heart o' the army. He hed n't none o' the high an' mighty airs o' most o' the British, 'at was allers a-stickin' up their damned red noses at us Provincials. He knowed we knowed more about bush fightin' 'an they did, an' he sot tu, tu l'arn all he could o' ary on' us, officer or private. He wa'n't above takin' lessons o' me in rifle shootin', an' one day he says tu me,

‘Where ’d ye git your high-duc’ name, Dalrymple?’ an’ I says, ‘From my father, I s’pose.’ ‘An’ who was he?’ says he, an’ I tol’ him all I knowed, it interestin’ on him mightily; an’ when I showed him the pictur’ he looked a long spell at it an’ at a sort o’ pictur’ on the back, an’ then he up an’ says, ‘You’ve got noble blood in your veins, an’ if you had your rights you’d be a Scottish peer. Haow ’d ye like tu be a lord?’ ‘I do’ know, your lordship,’ says I. ‘I hain’t never had no experience in ’t. What du they hafter du, my lord?’

“He kinder laughed, an’ says he, ‘You ’d haftu ride over your estate an’ see haow things was goin’, an’ you ’d live in a big fine haouse wi’ lots o’ sarvants, an’ entertain lots o’ fine ladies an’ gentlemen, an’ you ’d have a seat in Parliament, an’ I can’t tell ye what all.’ ‘An’ wear fine clothes an’ have my hair iled an’ powdered?’ says I. ‘Of course,’ says he, ‘an’ have lots o’ money an’ hunt an’ shoot in the proper seasons.’ ‘That ’s suthin’ like,’ says I, ‘but the clo’es an’ the comp’ny an’ the paowdered hair an’ the big haouse, I do’ want none on

'em, thank ye, my lord; ' an' then he laughed fit tu split, an' then sobered daown an' says, 'Wal, when this campaign is over I shall look the matter up, for I believe if you had your rights you 'd be Sir Kenelm Dalrymple of that ilk, instead of a poor private in the Rangers.' 'But this is a tol'able free life,' says I, 'an' my clo'es is easy an' my hair short, an' I don't haftu ride no horse,' an' then he laughed again.

"But he was killed in the fust skirmish, more's the pity for us all, an' there wa'n't never no more o' my bein' Sir Kenelm — not as I care the primin' of a rifle for that, though. Haow 'd you enj'y bein' one on 'em, Josi?"

"I hain't never be'n in the lordin' business — not so much as seen one on 'em, an' I can't say," Josiah answered after some consideration. "But I cal'late a tew hundred acre pitch an' a hired man 'd gi' me abaout all the lordin' I want to tackle."

"The freedom o' the woods is better 'n the hul on 't," said the landless heir of a princely manor, as he turned the canoe's prow to an inviting beach; and there, as

they rested from paddling and stretched their cramped legs, he drew forth from his breast a miniature of a beautiful woman clad in the costume and with her hair in the elaborate dressing of the first decade of the century. In the back of the locket were the armorial bearings of the Dalrymples of Dalrymple, in gold and enamel, with the legend "*Suum cuique.*"

"And this is all you ever seen o' your mother, is 't?" Josiah asked, after studying the fair face awhile.

"All 'at I remember," the old man answered, with a sigh, as he carefully replaced the miniature in an inner pocket. "An' I tell ye what it is, boy, a man 'at hain't never had a chance to know his mother has got the odds ag'in' him. Wal, there's aour fleets, an' we must let 'em know what they're comin' tu," said Kenelm, as the van of the American flotilla appeared beyond a distant headland.

They made all haste now to return, and soon met the flagship in advance. This they boarded and Kenelm made his report to Arnold, while Josiah held on at the side

in the canoe, the salt-sea sailors looking down in contempt and wonder at him and his frail craft.

“ Say, cabbagehead ! ” one of them called, “ did ye sight the fleet ? How many sail did ye make ’em, an’ where away be they ? ”

“ As many as you ’ll want, an’ they’ll soon be nigher ’an you want,” said Josiah.

CHAPTER VIII

SCOUTING ON CHAMPLAIN

KENELM presently joined Josiah and they pushed away from the galley.

“His orders is for us tu git ashore on the highland an’ see how things goes an’ then put for Ticonderogue,” said Kenelm.

The two landed, secreted the canoe in the bushes, and climbed to the top of the rocky promontory, from which they watched the American squadron pass behind the island of Valcour and anchor in line across the inner channel. An hour later the British fleet came bowling along before the wind, and, discovering the position of the enemy, put about and attempted to beat in after them. But the larger vessels, which depended upon their sails alone, were unable to do so, and only gunboats and galleys, using sweeps, could follow.

They engaged hotly and were as hotly

replied to. Cannon and echoes bellowed continuous thunder, and thick clouds of smoke soon enveloped both fleets so, that the scouts could distinguish nothing of either save the large sailing craft, and the huge unwieldy rideau, which lay anchored outside. Even their outlines soon grew dim in the thickening haze which the battle was adding to the vaporous October atmosphere.

Suddenly the cloud was torn by a belching dome of smoke, and a broad shaft of fire carried upward an indistinguishable shower of wreckage. There was a swelling volume of thunder, a moment of awful silence, then a patter of falling fragments, then a cheer and an answering cheer, and the thunder of the cannon began again. From the position of the explosion the scouts guessed it was an American vessel. By and by there was a nearer one in the British line. At last towards nightfall firing ceased, the cloud of battle drifted by, and both shattered lines were disclosed, the Americans apparently having suffered most.

The scouts decided that there was little hope for their side, and their own best course

was to make for Ticonderoga with all speed. Accordingly they set forth as soon as darkness enabled them to do so without discovery, and at dawn were crossing Corlear's Bay, near to Split Rock, when they saw sails looming behind them in the gray light. The scouts could not determine of which fleet the vessels were, and ran the canoe into the dividing fissure of the Rock to wait and ascertain.

Presently they discovered the American flag flying, and a galley swept past, and another and another, and could scarcely suppress a cheer for the audacious escape out of the jaws of the enemy.

But the faster sailing and less crippled English vessels were close on Arnold's heels, and now began firing. Kenelm and Josiah determined to make a bold push for the eastern point, Ko-zo-ap-skwa, skirt the great bay, and continue their journey by land if necessary. They shot out of the Split with all the strength of arms and paddles, and were halfway across before attracting the attention of either fleet. Then they were hailed, but still pursued their course, in

spite of several musket shots, until they were almost in the shelter of the shore, when a bullet shattered Josiah's paddle and entered the canoe amidships at the water line. They hastily cast the guns captured from the Indians far out into the deep water, and scrambled to the rocky beach from the sinking boat and abandoned her, though a patch of bark, a thread of split spruce-root, and a little turpentine and deer's tallow would have made her as good as she ever was ; but there was no time for such work. A long, circuitous journey lay before them, the circuit of the bay, with three streams to cross and tangled woods to march through.

They began it at once and had not gone ten steps when there was a sharp twang of a bow-string, and a new made arrow with a flint point cut through the sleeve of Kenelm's rifle shirt and lodged in the breast of it, just grazing his skin. Another whistled like a swooping hawk past Josiah's head. The two men charged into the undergrowth whence the arrows had come, but found no one, and, concluding that discretion was the better part of valor, hastened their retreat.

They crossed the salmon stream on a great jam of driftwood, and soon came to the abandoned clearing and their own cabin, which had been their last real home. The English grasses that Josiah had sown were making a feeble struggle against lusty ferns and sprouting saplings, and a few stripped black stalks marked the place of the corn-field. The pestle of the plumping-mill had parted by its weight the rotting thong of bark, and lay beside the hollowed stump in which the black mould of fallen leaves was gathering. A blackberry brier grew rankly in a crevice of the threshold, and its talon-like thorns snatched viciously at Josiah as he pushed open the unlatched door, as if to keep him from entering to the hearthstone his own hands had laid. A squirrel scurried away from his middens pile of cone chips on the hearth, and from his safe retreat of the loft scoffed at the one who was now the intruder. Some large beast, whose tracks were imprinted in the cold ashes of the fireplace, had made its lair in the old straw-bed. Josiah smiled grimly as he saw how much more at home the wild things

were than he in what he had once called his own, and how nature was asserting and re-establishing herself, and erasing the signs of his sojourning. With what high hopes he had hewn and builded and delved, and now it was all nothing to him.

Meanwhile Kenelm was questing to some purpose. Overgrowth of brambles and sprouts did not set him at fault, and he went unerringly to the old hiding-place and pulled forth the brandy-cask, wherefrom he drew a deep draught and filled a flask for Josiah and one for himself. Now they built a raft and got to the other bank.

“And naow,” said Kenelm, starting up after a few minutes’ rest, “we’ll strike for the Great Otter a mile above the maouth, an’ hit the lake where it happens, about Button Mold Bay, maybe.”

“And what abaout our prisoners? We don’t want tu leave ’em to starve.”

“Never you fear but what they’re safe enough,” Kenelm laughed. “Who but them du you s’pose it was paid their compliments tu us on Thompson’s P’int? You don’t find no bow-arrer Injins so nigh the

forts onless there's a good reason for it. They got loose someway, an' hevin' no guns made 'em some bow-arrers, an' started for Canerdy. If they 'd ben in practory they 'd ha' pinned us fust pop."

The scouts struck the lake diagonally at a point where the running fight, whose progress up the lake they had noted as they journeyed, seemed to have stopped.

They hurried on till they came to a small bay on the sheltered south shore, off which two of Arnold's galleys lay grounded and burning, with their flags still flying. Now and then a heated gun sent its charge of grape hurtling into the woods and banks; and avoiding these aimless volleys, they drew near.

"Hark!" cried Josiah, listening with held breath. "Some poor divil's left aboard on her!" and he dashed into the water and out to the burning galley, followed close by his comrade.

They climbed the prow to the smoking deck, where they found a lieutenant shot in both legs. The flames were creeping toward him along the blood-stained deck,

and he was making frantic but futile efforts to drag himself to the bulwarks and cast himself into the lake to drown. Kenelm poured a draught of brandy down the wounded man's throat, then lifted him and bore him quickly and carefully to the shore, which was not difficult, as the galley was grounded in water not more than waist deep. A British craft was already at the mouth of the bay, and there was no time to lose. The two carried him up the bank into the woods and laid him behind a knoll, when Josiah went for water.

"It's all up with me," the poor fellow groaned; "but those devils should n't have left me to roast to death. Thank you, God bless you, for giving me an easier death. Take these papers to the fort and they'll be sent to my people. We fought a good fight, but it was no use. Good-by." With that he breathed his last. Laying him in a house just deserted by its owner, the scouts hurried on their way, already pursued by British soldiers and sailors.

"Down!" Kenelm whispered, he being in the lead, and plunged into a thicket of

cedars beside the path, whither Josiah followed, and a moment later a band of Indians came questing along the road, as eager as hounds at fault. Others came up and, meeting the soldiers and sailors almost opposite the hidden scouts, fell to talking of affairs. It appeared they had been lying in ambush for Arnold's force, which had fortunately slipped past a little too quickly for them.

"Look!" Kenelm whispered in surprise, almost too loudly for safety, — so loudly that Josiah gave him a cautionary kick. "Roast me an' eat me if that ol' he one hain't aour big Sabattis Wadso, 'at we passed off on the Yorkers for Ethan Allen."

Josiah looked more closely at the broad, naturally good-humored face of the gigantic Indian now almost savage in its expression of eagerness, and nodded an affirmative.

"An' I s'pose if he ketched us naow he would n't think no more o' peelin' aour heads 'an he would o' skinnin' a mushrat."

"If you don't want tu know for sartin, you'd better keep still," Josiah whispered, but some slight sound or movement had already caught the alert senses of one of

the Indians. His face was turned intently toward the hiding-place of the scouts ; then as he took a few cautious steps nearer, his slowly roving eyes, followed by those of his comrades, became fixed on one point and alight with a fierce joy. Then with one accord and a hideous discord of yelps the painted band swooped down upon the thicket, and the two scouts were dragged forth from their ineffectual hiding. They were roughly handled, and tomahawks and knives were brandished threateningly about their heads until the big Indian whom they had recognized, thrusting his yelling comrades aside, came to the front.

“ Hugh ! ” he ejaculated, seizing Kenelm’s hand in a vice-like grip. “ You know um me, Lymp!e ! Me Wadso ; me know um Josi, too, all dlink um lum ; fight um Yorker mans plenty up Wonakaketookese. What for you fight um king sojer ? Ugh ! Dat plenty bad, Lymp!e. Mebby kill um you now.”

“ I’ll resk them a-hurtin’ on us,” said Kenelm. “ We haint no spies, but reg’lar scaouts, a-wearin’ aour regimentals. It’s your fellers we’re in danger on.”

"You'll be well treated by us, I promise you, my man, for Sir Guy has given special orders that all prisoners of war shall be kindly treated," said the lieutenant in command of the platoon of soldiers. "I'd take you in charge, but I suppose these Indians will claim the right to turn you over to Sir Guy, as they captured you." Then addressing Wadso, "Captain Wadso, if I leave these men with you, you must give them up to your great brother, Sir Guy Carleton, safe and sound as they are now. He will be very angry if any harm comes to them by your people."

"Sartin, brudder," Wadso answered, yet looked troubled as he noted the sullen anger in the faces of his followers, who evidently comprehended the import of the colloquy.

"Their fingers is jest itchin' for aour scalps an' their hearts a-covetin' aour rifles, an' well they may, for the' haint their like on the frontier," said Kenelm, anxiously watching the Indians as they passed the guns from one to another, trying the oily smoothness of the locks and aiming the long barrels at various objects.

Wadso spoke earnestly to his followers in their own language, urging them to turn over the prisoners to the soldiers. But their only response was a brief and sullen negative.

"My mans say no give um up to-day — to-morrow, mebbby," Wadso explained to the officer.

"Damned fine discipline these fellows are under," that gentleman exclaimed testily. "I'd as lief have a pack of wolves for allies! I don't see but I must leave you with them, my men," he said to the prisoners. "I'll report your case to the general at once, and I'm sure he'll have it attended to." Then to the Indians, — "Now, mind you, if any harm comes to these men while they're in your hands, your great brother will never forgive you. No more fire-water, no more presents, and I don't know what he will do to you! His orders are very positive."

Indeed, so kindly did the humane and politic Carleton treat all the prisoners who fell into his hands that he quite won their hearts; and when they were paroled it was

not deemed prudent by the American commanders to let them mingle with the other troops, but to remove them to a distant quarter, where his praises might be more safely sounded.

"Yes," said the grim old ranger bitterly, "an' before to-morrer mornin' they'll be fur on the road tu Canerdy wi' aour top-knots a-dryin' like tew beaver skins, an' the crows a-holdin' a inquest on aour bodies. I 'm almighty glad aour hair 's tew short tu be praoud on." Yet for all his bravado he felt his scalp crawling as if already bidding farewell to his skull, as the lieutenant ordered his men to fall in, and they began marching back to the boats.

No sooner were the soldiers out of sight than the arms of the prisoners were pinioned, and they were led away to a sheltered cove, where their captors intended encamping for the night.

"Wal, boy, this scaout's comin' tu an eend," said Kenelm, as the two lay tied, neck and heels, near a great fire around which Indians were squatted talking earnestly while they watched the roasting of

the ribs of a freshly butchered hog. "But I do' know as it makes much odds, for they got all aour news an' more tew, to the fort long ago."

"What's wuss, it eends all aour scaout-in'," Josiah rejoined despondently.

"I can't say but what you 're right," said Kenelm, "erless aour ol' friend gives us a boost on the sly, for he can't du nothin' orderin' or a-coaxin' his cussed gang. As nigh as I can make aout by their gab, they can't quite settle on 't whether they 'll kill us here or tote us off tu Canerdy, an' hold us for a ransom. One's 'baout as bad as t' other, only there is a chance o' givin' on 'em the slip as long as you 're alive.—Say, Sabattis, what be you fellers a-goin' tu du wi' us?"

"No talk um me!" the big chief said, frowning upon him. "My young mans plenty hugly; you talk um me, make um more hugly."

"He don't 'pear tu be as socierble as he useter, wi' a slug o' rum an' hell fire a-thaw-in' his insides."

"Tew much talk was what fetched us

where we be, an' I guess talk won't git us aout'n this scrape," Josiah said significantly.

"I forgive ye flingin' that in my face," said the old ranger with an injured air, "but I will say, 'f I had n't had you tu talk tu, I would n't ha' said nothin', so you're as deep in the mud as I be in the mire," to which Josiah vouchsafed no response.

When the roast was done the Indians fell to it tooth and nail like a pack of hungry wolves, yet with all their gorging did not forget to furnish their captives occasional generous mouthfuls from their dirty fingers. This the experienced old scout construed as a sign that they were to be taken to Canada, as toothsome food would hardly be wasted on men who were presently to be killed.

"But if they take us there it'll mean runnin' the gauntlet, an' you'll think that hain't no 'stornary improvement on death if their cussed squaws take a hand in 't." With that he turned upon his side, and Josiah following his example, both soon fell into a deep sleep, in spite of the uncertainty of their fate and the discomfort of their bonds.

Far in the night each was awakened by a voice whispering in his ear, "S-s-h! keep um still!" and looking up, they saw the bulky form of Sabattis Wadso bending over them; then felt his knife cautiously severing the thongs that bound wrists and ankles. Inch by inch they stretched their cramped limbs, and, carefully lifting their heads, they saw by the dull glow of the dying fire all the gluttoned Waubankees rolled in their blankets sleeping like gorged beasts.

The south wind that held Sir Guy Carleton's fleet from Ticonderoga until he was weary of waiting, was already beginning to blow, and the clash of branches and the gusty rustle of leaves effectually overbore the slight sounds of a crushed leaf or snapped twig as the freed scouts, following their deliverer, crept on hands and knees, slow as turtles, until they were twenty yards away from the circle of sleepers. Then Kenelm arrested Sabattis with a grasp on his ankle and overhauled him clutch by clutch until his mouth was at the Indian's ear, and whispered, —

"I hain't a-goin' another damned inch

wi'aout my gun. I'd as lief be in hell wi'aout claws!"

"Me got um," Wadso answered, and led on a little further, when all arose to their feet; and stooping low, moving more swiftly forward, they presently found the guns lying beside a log. Now they came to the thicket where the scouts had been discovered, into which Kenelm dived and brought forth the brandy flasks, which had been prudently dropped there when they went forth to give themselves up. Kenelm handed one to the Indian, while he and Josiah refreshed themselves with moderate draughts from the other. Sabattis sniffed the uncorked flask with a suppressed grunt of satisfaction, and held it long to his lips.

"His mother never whipped him for hold-in' his breath," Kenelm remarked, as he watched the slow ascent of the flask's bottom. It came down with a faint chipper of its almost exhausted contents, and Wadso led on at a brisk but noiseless pace until he set the scouts on a plain trail leading southward.

"Go Carillon. No go Fledlic, English

got um. Ketch you, you go dar. Goo'by. Wadso no forgot um flien'. Goo'by," and turning away he was swallowed quickly in the gloom of the woods.

"Good-by, you blessed ol' heathen!" Kenelm whispered huskily after him. "I reckoned you'd strike fire true when it come tu the scratch, an' you hain't flashed in the pan. — Naow, boy, le's make tracks quick an' fur apart for Ticonderogue."

They pushed forward with all the speed possible in the darkness, often alarmed by sounds which they took to be the tramping and yells of the pursuing enemy, but which were in fact nothing more terrible than the clash and fall of branches, and the crunch of chafing tree trunks. At daylight they arrived opposite the fort, and a hail soon brought a boat over for them.

Carleton's fleet got but little beyond Crown Point, when the strong south wind continuing with increasing fury, he despaired of getting any further, and weighing anchor sailed for Canada.

CHAPTER IX

HUBBARDTON

DURING the winter Josiah Hill lingered about the forts and neighboring settlements, leading an aimless, vagabond sort of life, now chopping, now trapping, until the following summer brought Burgoyne's overwhelming invasion, when all non-combatants departed and all able-bodied patriots joined the army. Warner's earnest appeal brought Josiah, with many another, to the defense of the fortress which he had helped to capture. Burgoyne's army had invested the place, and it was now well known that if he should occupy the strangely neglected heights of Sugar Loaf or Mount Defiance, Ticonderoga would be at his mercy; but General St. Clair hoped that an assault might be decided upon, for this he felt confident he could repel.

Upon indications that guns were being

hauled to the top of the mountain, a council of war was held, and it was decided to evacuate Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. Night had fallen ; lanterns twinkled on the crest of Mount Defiance like stranded stars ; shouts of command, the challenge of sentinels, the rumble of gun carriages, could be faintly heard coming from the British lines ; and now and then the fierce yell of the Indians, more fearful than the panther's scream, as they celebrated some preparatory rite of warfare.

The Continental troops were outside the walls of Ticonderoga, some already within those of Independence ; small detachments crossed the long floating bridge, and orderlies hurried to and fro. In the laxness of discipline which was but too common in the Revolutionary armies, Josiah was wandering at will, listening to the various sounds which came from the British lines and watching the glimmering lights on Mount Defiance, when he heard approaching voices and slipped into a shadow to escape observation and so unwittingly became an eavesdropper.

“Yes, the troops are all ready to move,” said one voice.

“The Yankees of the Grants are all inside the fort?” the other asked.

“All but Warner’s,” was the answer.

“They ’re likely to be gobbled,” said the other with a chuckle, “and that would be an easy way of disposing of a very troublesome element and make matters easier for our New York friends.”

“Warner’s regiment will be the rear guard, so if we are pursued” —

“Yes, I see” — and the voices passed out of hearing.

Josiah had heard enough to satisfy him that some treachery was intended against his people, and went at once to the gate, where he gave the countersign and was admitted. Inquiring for Colonel Robinson, he was told that officer was sick and could not be seen. As he stood at the door of the quarters, contriving some means of giving warning, an officer hastily approached it with a pitcher of water.

“Major,” he said, “I want tu speak tu the colonel ’baout suthin’ ’at consarns him mightily!”

“Well, what is it,” the officer demanded curtly.

“I can’t speak on ’t here. Le’ me go inside.”

“Come in, then,” said the other with some show of annoyance, after eying him sharply. Josiah followed him into the barrack room, where Colonel Robinson lay on a pallet, looking pale and distressed.

“Here’s a man wants to speak to you, colonel, an’ won’t take ‘No’ for an answer,” said the major. “His name is Hill and he belongs to Warner’s regiment.”

“Well, what is it, my man?” Robinson asked, and Josiah told what he had overheard in the fewest words.

“By God! That tallies exactly with what I’ve just seen!” the major blurted out. “Who do you think they were that you overheard?”

“I would n’t want tu swear to ’t, but I think it was the general for one; t’ other I did n’t know.”

“Well, we’ll block their little game,” said Robinson, rising painfully. “Major, let the men be paraded under arms, with their knapsacks. Do it quietly. I’m obliged to you, Hill, and won’t forget it.”

The regiment was soon in line and marched through the gate, when, after a brief halt, it took its way toward the head of the bridge.

“What is this regiment moving without orders for?” General St. Clair demanded hotly. “Halt, battalion!”

“Battalion, march!” cried Robinson. “It means, sir, that we’re not to be caged like rats.”

“I’ll order you fired on, if you don’t halt,” St. Clair stormed.

“Fire and be damned!” said the Puritan colonel. “Battalion, prime; load; fix bayonets; shoulder arms; forward, march!” and the regiment marched steadily on toward the bridge, while other troops in the route moved out of the way.

The long triple column of un-uniformed militiamen went swaying across the undulating bridge, Josiah sticking close to its rear until the sharp slope of Independence was mounted, when the regiment was halted near Warner’s, in which our straggler took his place.

All was bustle and confusion, men singly and in squads hurrying in all directions;

here a party burying blacksmith tools and intrenching implements, there another with teams carting bags of grain from storehouses and emptying them into fissures of the rocks, and now the main army came pouring across the bridge, through the fort and out upon the road which led toward Castleton.

They had nearly all effected a crossing, apparently undiscovered by the enemy, when a rattle-brained Canadian sutler came running bareheaded to a wooden house inside the earthworks.

“Dat damn hol’ Anglais’ he an’t goin’ gat mah haouse! No, not not’ing in it!” he cried, lighting a torch at a smouldering camp-fire and rushing into the house.

He threw the contents of a straw bed upon the floor, thrust the torch into it, and in a moment the building was in a blaze, and the insignificant house grew into a tower of red fire. The mounting flames threw a lurid glare over everything, revealing the scattered groups, the serried ranks, the crowded bridge, the buff and blue uniforms of the Continentals waiting at the further end, the

gray walls of the fort, the Stars and Stripes still floating above them, and the disturbed lake shimmering in the fitful glare of the conflagration.

All was confusion — almost rout — and this was increased by a shot from Defiance whistling through space and plunging into the channel at the base of the cliff of Mount Independence before the sullen boom of the cannon's report shook the air.

The rattle of drums calling to arms ; the shrill screaming of the fife, the blare of bugles, announced the beginning of pursuit by Frazier's British regulars and Reidesel's Brunswickers. The forest-paled road was choked with crowding troops — Continentals, Rangers, and militiamen inextricably mixed — officers shouting and cursing in vain endeavors to restore order out of chaos.

Robinson's regiment struck into the road, and St. Clair again threatened to fire upon it. There was an ominous cluck of cocked muskets and the threat was not executed. Warner's coolness and commanding presence were of most avail, and at last the column fell into orderly and rapid retreat,

his regiment holding Mount Independence till the last company had taken its route.

Then, as the timbers of the burning house fell and smouldered, casting fitful gleams amid intervals of gloom upon the scene of desertion and desolation, the brave Green Mountain Boys took up their dogged retreat into the shadows of the forest, bitterly cursing the neglect of defenses which had caused the abandonment of the stronghold which but two years before they had wrested from the enemy.

Arriving at Hubbardton, the weary army halted for a brief rest. When, in the morning, it resumed its retreat, Colonel Warner was left with his own, Herrick's, and Hale's regiments to occupy the position until all stragglers had come in, and then to keep one and a half miles in the rear of the main army.

"There is my fort," said Tom Torrey, a man of middle age standing next to Josiah in the ranks, and pointing to a neat log house in the midst of a new farm; "an' I hope the garrison's left it. No, by George!" he continued anxiously, after a moment of

intent watching. "Their flag's a-flyin' yet," as he saw the smoke flaunting from the chimney. "It hain't no place for a womern an' childern naow. I don't see why they hain't cleared aout!"

Warner's and Francis' regiments drew up in line of battle across the road and the adjoining fields, taking advantage of every sheltering tree and log heap that offered. Hale's regiment, however, drew off and gave no help.

Heralded by the shriek of fifes and the sharp rattle of brass drums that shook the woods with quick reverberation, Frazier's troops came marching down the road in gallant array, and deployed in line opposite the Americans. The latter at once opened fire, every gun leveled with that deadly precision of aim which was the constant complaint of the English. Their fire was returned with less effect, for the aimless bullets hurtled over the heads of the Americans, and there were ghastly gaps in the line where scarlet coats and white cross-belts were such fair targets.

"See if that red rooster drops when I

fire!" said Torrey to Josiah, and aimed at a British major who stood upon a great stump reconnoitering the position of the Americans. At the report of the rifle the brave officer fell headlong from his perch. "Lord forgive me! That's tew much like murder!" Torrey cried, in swift contrition for the deed. "I shall ketch it tu pay for that!"

"They come here tu kill us, an' if we git the fust chance it is aour good luck," Josiah said. "You hain't done no more 'n your duty."

Torrey shook his head. "I shall ketch it afore the fight's over. You'll see. An' what's goin' tu become o' my poor womern an' childern's more 'n I know. Josier Hill, you promise me if you git aout o' this alive you'll go up tu that haouse an' git 'em away an' safe inside of aour lines. Will ye?"

"Nonsense! You'll come aout o' this all right," said Josiah, trying to make light of the other's forebodings.

But Torrey shook his head sadly. "No, I'm sure on't as I be I see you, an' you

must promise me tu ta' keer on 'em. Promise !”

“ Yes, yes, I promise — if you don't come aout all right.”

“ Thank ye, an' gi' me your hand on 't,” said Torrey, stretching forth his hand as they left their corner to move forward.

The forest shuddered with sharp echoes, the spiteful crack of rifles, the sullen roar of volleyed musketry, the shrieks and groans of wounded men.

The British line wavered, then broke under the galling fire, and fell back until it received the support of Reidesel's advancing Brunswickers. Still the Americans pushed gallantly onward until victory seemed almost attained, when their Colonel Francis, though sorely wounded, yet leading his regiment into the thickest of the fight, fell, pierced by a mortal wound.

At that a sudden panic swept the Americans into confusion and retreat. In vain Warner commanded, entreated, led on. Then realizing the hopelessness of it all, he sank down upon a log and poured out a storm of curses after the scurrying rout.

Quickly recovering his self-control, he called loudly to his men to rally at Castleton, and himself vanished in the maze of the woods. St. Clair, only six miles away, heard the battle raging, yet moved not to the rescue of his brave subordinate.

CHAPTER X

RUBY

IT was every one for himself now, and Josiah, taking advantage of every sheltering tree trunk, had scarcely noticed the absence of his comrade, when he almost stumbled over him lying among the rank ferns in the hollow of a cradle knoll. The blood was streaming from a wound in the breast, his life quickly going with it.

“You see!” he gasped, as Josiah dropped beside him. “Remember — ta’ keer — of — Hanner — an’ Ruby an’ the rest. Good-by,” and his spirit passed.

Josiah knelt a moment beside the dead man, then composed the stiffening limbs, laid the hat over the motionless face, and stole away to more secure hiding until the flush of pursuit and pillage was over. Then keeping the cover of woods, fences, and inequalities of the ground, he made toward

Torrey's house, approaching it cautiously from the rear.

There was no sign of life to be seen about it, and it was only when he drew quite near that he heard the sound of suppressed weeping. Looking in at the door a sad sight met his eyes. The dead body of a woman lay upon the floor, the disheveled head lying in a pool of blood that oozed from a scalp wound and cleft skull, the savage sign of Indian slaughter. Beside it, crouched in an attitude of grief and despair, was a girl of eighteen, silent and tearless, her soft dark eyes denied the relief of tears, while she suppressed the piteous lamentations of four younger brothers and sisters.

"My gal," said Josiah gently, making his presence known. She looked up with a startled, hunted look. "Is it your mother?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," she answered.

"And you are Tom Torrey's family?"

"Yes. The Indians killed mother this morning. I hid the children under the washtubs in the cellar and myself behind the chimbley. They tried to burn the

house, an' I put it aout. They killed the cow an' pig, an' took everything."

The body of the murdered mother was placed in a hastily prepared grave, a rude burial lacking in all form of service, but not in solemnity.

Josiah now lost no time in leading away his sorrowful charge by the most secret ways that tended toward the shifting frontier, where comparative safety was to be found.

The Indians had plundered and destroyed everything in the house, except a little meal and a few pounds of salt pork, which had escaped their notice. These Josiah put in his knapsack, and when, at nightfall, he made camp for the homeless orphans in a dense thicket of evergreens, where he ventured to kindle a small fire, he set forth the scant rations. He mixed the meal with water in a vessel of birch bark, and saw Ruby Torrey spread it with housewifely care — though she protested it would be good for nothing without salt — on a johnny-cake board which he hewed out with his ranger's tomahawk.

"When d'ye s'pose we'll see father?"

she asked, looking up at him from her task and not a little confused to find his sharp gray eyes fixed steadily upon her.

“See your father?” he repeated, starting as if from a dream. “I do’ know — I can’t tell ye.”

“Is there anything the matter with him?” she asked with a searching look, and a white pallor upon her face. “You’d better tell me true.”

“You’ve be’n a brave gal, Ruby, an’ you must keep on bein’ one,” said he, struggling to swallow a choking lump in his throat. “Oh, my poor gal! Your father was killed in the fight to-day! I promised him, the last word he heared, I’d ta’ keer on ye — you and your brothers an’ sisters an’ your mother — we didn’t know ’baout her — but he’s with her now. I’ll keep my promise faithful, Ruby.”

She bowed her face upon her knees in grief too great for tears, until she felt a rough hand laid gently upon her head, when she wept silently. She drew the children to her and soothed their sobbing, but Josiah checked it more effectually with the admonition : —

“You mustn’t make no n’ise or them praowlin’ divils ’ll ketch us,” and presently got them engaged with the johnnycake and frizzled pork, and then to sleep on fragrant beds of hemlock.

“I guess I ’ll resk a flash more of fire,” he said, and carefully mended the flickering blaze. “The Injins won’t be a-shoolin’ ’raound much afore the crack o’ day.”

He bent his ear to catch a faint tremulous wail borne from far away on a waft of night breeze — a sound too elusive for the girl’s less trained sense. The shrug — that was his silent recognition of it — was almost a shudder, for he knew it was the rallying cry of the wolves, gathering to the battlefield.

“You must eat a mou’ful,” he said, proffering a morsel of johnnycake and a slice of pork, carefully frizzled over the coals. “Yes, you got tu,” he urged. “You ’ll want all the strength you can muster tumorrer.”

She took the food, wondering to find herself yielding such ready obedience to him. He assigned to her a bed of twigs beside

the sleeping children, and covered her with his blanket, saying: "Naow sleep saound, for I got tu wake you afore the young uns an' talk over things." The last she saw between lids that weariness closed, in spite of the pain of grief, was the silent, motionless form of her protector sitting in the fading firelight in intent abstraction, with his rifle across his knees.

Objects were becoming dimly defined in the light of dawn, when the girl was awakened by Josiah's voice, sounding as strange and unfamiliar as her surroundings looked, until with a sharp pang she realized that yesterday's events were not a frightful dream.

"I want tu talk tu you a minute afore the children wakes up," he said, speaking low; and she arose and sat down near the freshly kindled fire. "I gin your father my word, an' him a-dyin', 'at I'd ta' keer on ye faithful," he began abruptly, looking straight into her sad dark eyes; "an' I'm a-goin' tu, fur as I can. It hain't alone from keepin' your body from bein' hurt, but your good name, an' a gal can't go traipsin' 'raound the country wi' a man 'at hain't

nothin' tu her by blood nor noways wi'-
aout that bein' hurt; so I've got tu marry
you, the fust square or minister we light
on."

"Oh, I can't! I—I don't want tu,"
she gasped, all in a tremble, and pale and
red by turns.

"I do' want tu nuther," he said in blunt
honesty. "I never thought tu come to't,
but I got tu, an' so we got tu make the best
on't. Naow we'll eat what we've got an'
be off."

The children were aroused and fed, and
the party set forth by such routes as were
likely to be clear of the enemy, but did not
always prove so. More than once they dis-
covered, just in time to avoid being discov-
ered themselves, a squad of British or Ger-
man soldiers in quest of prisoners or booty,
or driving a small herd of cattle that the
fleeing settlers had been obliged to leave
behind.

Once, as they were hurrying along a dark
and obscure forest path, the soft patter of
rapid footsteps was heard behind them. Jo-
siah pushed the children into a thicket, drew

Ruby to one side and made her crouch behind a huge log, and sheltered himself behind a tree, where he peered cautiously down the path.

“Injins! — six on ’em — trackin’ us!” he whispered back to her. Then quickly filling his horn charger, and handing it to her with a bullet and patch, said, “Hold these ’ere till I want ’em.”

He resumed his scarcely interrupted watch of the approaching enemy, now coming rapidly up the path, with eager glances divided between the tracks of the fugitives and a search forward for the fugitives themselves. He covered the breast of the leader with a careful aim, and pulled trigger at the first moment that the next Indian came directly in the line of fire. The foremost fell headlong at the report, the second staggered and sank to the ground, while his gun searched blindly for an aim at the unseen foe, and those who followed vanished in the cover of the woods quicker than the thin smoke of the rifle dissolved in the air.

In the same instant Josiah turned and took the charger from Ruby’s ready hand,

emptied it in the muzzle of the rifle, then took patch and ball and rammed them down, primed the pan, cocked the piece, and was closely scanning the cover for another target.

What he first discovered was the entry of a new actor, a strong, tall man on horseback, but evidently not a belligerent, for he was dressed in the plain garb of a Quaker, not so noticeable in those days for its cut as for its drab color and the broad-brimmed, uncocked hat. Furthermore, he carried no arms of any sort, but only the spiked jacob-staff, then in use by land surveyors, and which he bore upon his shoulder, while the compass was strapped in a case behind his saddle. Nevertheless the Indians seemed to consider him legitimate prey, for the hindmost of them aimed his gun at him, changing front in doing so and exposing himself to the fire of Josiah, but trusting to his three remaining comrades to guard his rear. Fortunately for the man of peace, the priming of the Indian's gun flashed in the pan, and he, assured that the horse-man was unarmed, dropped the firelock and rushed upon him with uplifted tomahawk.

“Ta’ keer my staff don’t come down on thy head an’ hurt thee — it’s mortal heavy !” the surveyor said in a calm, cautionary tone, as his bridle rein was violently seized, and even as he spoke the ironshod oaken staff fell with stunning force on the naked head of his assailant, who dropped in limp collapse almost under the hoofs of the horse.

The surveyor slipped nimbly from the saddle, and turning the inert body face downward quickly tied the hands behind his back with a cord that he drew from his pocket. Then he drew the knife from its sheath and cast it and the tomahawk far into the undergrowth, and, picking up the gun, made it useless with a few sturdy strokes upon the trunk of the nearest tree.

“Thee might be tempted to do a mischief with thy carnal weapons,” he remarked ; and then, noticing that the Indian was beginning to show signs of returning consciousness, he turned him to a more comfortable posture, in spite of which the latter kicked and struggled violently to loosen his bonds. “Thee’s brought this all on thyself, friend,” said the Quaker in a tone of mild reproof, “and

thee 'd ought to be ashamed of thyself for tacklin' one that never done harm to thee or thine. Now thee 'd better try to get into the quiet, whilst thee waits for thy folks to come to thee."

With this admonition he left him, and taking up his jacobstaff, led his horse along the path. Suddenly he came upon the bodies of the Indians who had been brought down by Josiah's bullets—one stark dead, the other at the last gasp—and stood still, wondering at the ghastly sight. The other Indians were seized with a panic at the unexpected issue of the attack on the unarmed Quaker, following so quickly the fall of their comrades, and skulked away with all speed.

Josiah suspected this when no further attack was made on the surveyor, and, when he displayed the lure of his empty hat crown very temptingly without drawing their fire, was assured of it, and stepped forth from cover to congratulate his old acquaintance, Benjamin Ferris, who upon seeing him, but not yet recognizing him, asked, pointing to the dead Indians, —

"Is this some of thy work?"

“Yes, an’ a good job, tew,” Josiah answered, with some pride. “Both tu one shot.”

“It ’s bloody work,” said the surveyor, shaking his head. “I can’t bear to look at it. Let’s go away from here.”

“It was that or my scalp, an’ a young womern’s an’ four childern.”

“Maybe so, but thee’d better done as I done,” the Quaker said, still shaking his head solemnly.

“You done well, Mr. Ferris, but if that divil’s gun hed n’t missed, you never’d run another line.”

“What! does thee know me? Why, I do believe thee’s the young man that bought one of Nicholas’ rights of land from somebody that did n’t own it. Yes, and Hill’s thy name. Well, I’ve just been up that way to do a little surveying, but everything is so unsettled, and there’s nobody there but now and then a Tory; so I’m gettin’ back to Oblong as fast as I can. But who did thee say is with thee?”

Josiah told him the sad story of the Torreys.

“Poor things! Poor things!” Benjamin sighed, with pitying eyes upon the orphans, and casting about for some way of helping them. “I’ll tell thee what, Josiah, I’ll take the young woman behind me — she’s in the most danger — and the youngest gal afore me — she’s the least able to go afoot — and get ’em inside our lines as quick as I can. I reckon our folks hold Manchester, and if they do I know a good woman there that’ll take ’em in. Wheeler is her name, and she lives in the north end of the village, and thee can’t miss her.”

Josiah was loath to give up any part of his charge to another’s care, but it seemed the wiser way; and so, sadly parting, Ruby and her little sister rode away with the good surveyor.

Josiah smashed the guns of the dead Indians, upon whose ghastly faces the children gazed with fascinated horror, each eager to see, and yet be furthest from them.

“See! See!” cried one, and Josiah’s eyes followed the pointing finger just in time to see the Quaker’s late adversary sneaking into the forest maze, stooping low with

bound hands behind his back. The ranger's rifle instantaneously sought an aim, but failed to find it on the vanishing figure.

“Wal, go it, an' good reddance tu ye; but if I'd hed the handlin' on ye you'd be as harmless as your mates here.”

He forthwith got his little troop on the march, and now encouraging the youngest by an hour's ride astride his shoulders, and giving the others a helping hand, he got beyond the advance of the enemy without further adventure, and at nightfall of the next day came to Manchester.

He had no trouble in finding the house to which Benjamin Ferris had directed him, where he also found that good man still tarrying with Ruby and her little sister. The one neat room was presided over by a brisk little brunette matron, whose dark eyes and ruddy cheeks looked familiar to Josiah.

“Oh-h-h!” she cried, after a long, intent look at the new-come guest. “It ees M'sieu Josi. An't you rem'ber Mathilde — Pierre some tam? Dat is me, an' mah Deek he was go wid de harmy. Ah 'ope 'ee come

back to me an' hees boy. See la petit Deek?" and she showed with pride a miniature counterpart of Dick Wheeler. "An' you, M'sieu Josi, was dat yo' famile?"

"No, but they're goin' tu be," said he. "Father an' mother both dead an' left 'em on my hands. I want tu leave 'em wi' you till I can captur' a pa'son or a square."

"It's very proper you two should be married," said Benjamin. "And it's a pity you wa'n't members among Friends, an' so not be pestered with magistrates or hirelin' priests, but marry yourselves in the presence of your Heavenly Father, which seems most solemn, sensible, an' fittin' way."

But as this was not feasible, Josiah went out in quest of some one competent to perform the office, and found a elergyman, whom he brought forthwith to Mathilde's house, when the ceremony was duly performed. Friend Ferris was greatly grieved that the strict discipline of his society would not permit him to be present at the marriage, and that he was obliged to stand out of doors during the ceremony; but he would peep in at the window.

So after this brief and unique courtship, Josiah Hill became, against his will, a married man ; yet he never regretted it. When, many years later, he sat by her deathbed in their Danvis home, he took her wrinkled hand in his own, and with unwonted tenderness said, —

“ I hated the idee o’ bein’ merried, Ruby ; but if I ’d hunted the wide world over, I could n’t ha’ faound a better womern ’an I got, for there hain’t one in it faithfuller ner truer ’n what you ’ve be’n.”

And she answered, with love lighting her dimmed eyes, “ You ’ve allus be’n a good man tu me, father.”

CHAPTER XI

A CURIOUS BIT OF HISTORY

JOSIAH found part of his regiment at Manchester, and there, also, not long after, detachments began to arrive from Charlestown, whence General John Stark was sending them forward as fast as they could be supplied with their "much-needed articles: rum, kettles, and bullets." Then, disregarding General Schuyler's order to join him, Stark marched as far as Bennington, where he encamped at the request of the Vermont Committee of Safety, and so was ready to repel Baum's attempt to seize the public stores there.

Warner was with Stark, but the remnant of his regiment in which Josiah Hill was remained at Manchester under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Safford. Therefore Josiah had no part in the first conflict of that memorable day, which, though the troops

were insignificant in numbers, was one of the decisive battles of the world, for it sealed the fate of Burgoyne's army.

The Hessian redoubt, made upon the hill with infinite labor in a pouring deluge and the smothering heat of dog-day weather, was stormed by the raw Yankee militia with their bayonetless guns against the well-appointed, trained veterans, who were slain and captured till but few were left to be routed. Their Tory allies suffered as overwhelming a defeat, the Indians fled yelping from woods that were alive with terrible Yankee marksmen, the day was won, and the victors scattered far over the field to gather the spoils of war. Then, when no one suspected the coming of an enemy, there arose a martial din of fifes and drums, and Breyman's fresh troops came marching along the miry highway with two fieldpieces belching fire and smoke and hurtling showers of grape from their brazen throats.

The scattered Yankees gathered in squads to meet them, but were forced to fall back, until Warner's battalion, hurried on from Manchester by Safford, stood like a strong

tower to shelter them. Now the dispersed militiamen rallied and poured deadly volleys upon the red ranks of Hessians ; riflemen swarmed like hornets in the woods on their flanks, and every bullet struck its living target. Again the Hessians were routed, — their cannon were abandoned, hub-deep in the mire ; their brave colonel, mortally wounded, was taken with many of his soldiers ; many were dead and more wounded.

As the shadows of night fell and a halt of the pursuers was called, Josiah Hill, standing among the foremost, was thankful to be one of those to retrieve Hubbardton's day of disaster. Next day, as he was strolling over the battle-ground, he was accosted by a little gray-bearded man, begrimed with powder smoke. The half-dried corn husk in his hat proclaimed him to be one of yesterday's assailants of the redoubt. There was, moreover, something familiar in the toothless grin of greeting when he shouted : —

“ Why, boy, have you forgot your ol' mate, Sir Kenelm Dalrymple ? An' who've you got tu be, not tu know ol' friends ? ”

There was much for them to talk of, but

of all the news Kenelm heard, nothing astonished him so much as Josiah's marriage. "Oh, boy, boy!" he sighed, "that come o' my not stayin' with ye!"

Strolling about among the prisoners, they saw in one group of Tories a tall, lank fellow, who kept his hat drawn over his black brow.

"D' ye know this ol' friend?" said Kenelm, as going slyly behind the fellow he twitched off the hat and revealed the sanctimonious visage of Anthony Capron. "I wish they'd turn him over tu us," said Kenelm, "but they've got a nice pen built to fat such swine in — an' won't they git fat, though?"

Josiah had his desire of revenge more fully gratified when, during the deep snows of the following winter, he, being now a sergeant, received the following order:—

January 12, 1778.

TO CAPT. SAM'L ROBINSON, OVERSEER OF
TORIES:

You are hereby required to Detach Ten effective men under your Command with

proper officers to take charge and March them in Two Distinct files from this place through the Green Mountains to Col. Wm. Williams' Dwelling house in Draper Alias Wilmington within this State, who are to March & Tread the Snow in Sd. Road to suitable width for a Sleigh or Sleighs with a Span of Horses on Each Sleigh, and order them to return Marching in Same manner to this place with all convenient Speed, By order of Council, JONAS FAY, V. P.

N. B. You are to order 3 days provisions to each of such men & the same to be cooked this day & to March at 6 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Attest: JOSEPH FAY, Sec'y.

JONAS FAY, V. P.

To this was appended this order : —

To Sargeant Josiah Hill, you are hereby ordered to execute the within, and make due return thereof.

SAM'L ROBINSON, Overseer of Tories.

Accompanied by a guard, Josiah went at once to the prison which had been specially

built for the confinement of Tories. It was a double-walled log house, the space between the walls being filled with earth, and the place provided with an ample palisaded yard for the exercise of the prisoners, for they were treated with due regard to their health in this respect, and wholesome food was provided, as may be gathered from an order to furnish them "a wagon load of sauce," presumably garden vegetables, which is still "garden sass" in the parlance of old-fashioned folk. Josiah handed the order to the keeper, who gave him a list of the prisoners, and he proceeded to make the required draft.

"Naow, men, I'm tu give ten on ye a' stornary chance tu limber up your laigs an' git a maou'ful o' fresh air," he said, addressing the motley crowd. "Don't holler for a chance, 'cause I can't take only sech as is suited for the business. Anthony Capron, step aout. Long-laigged an' big-footed, you're built to order, ezackly. Abram Bennet, step aout. Hot-tempered they say you be — stubbed, you sartinly be. You'll du. Peter Bell, step aout. You're gittin' tewlogy, an' some o' your fat needs workin' off."

So he went on until the tally was completed, the men wondering on what disagreeable service they were detailed. They were not long in doubt nor well pleased when they were set to trampling and wallowing through the deep snow, when, if one lagged or shirked the foremost place, when it fell to his turn, he got the prick of a bayonet, while the guard marched comfortably in the beaten track at the rear.

“Capron, I’m a-cal’latin’ for you tu hev you work aout what you owe me at tew shillin’ a day,” said Josiah, as the other, short of breath and weary of limb, took his turn at the rear of the file. “Le’ me see, twenty-five paound York money ’d be five hunderd shillin’, tew ’ll go in that tew hunderd and fifty times. By the Lord Harry, one winter hain’t long enough. Wal, I owe you suthin’ for takin’ that gal off’in my hands.”

Anthony Capron thought when he was back again in the Tory prison, with every muscle sore and every bone aching, after three days of wading through the snow, that he was not very deeply in debt to the man he had swindled.

CHAPTER XII

THE SMOOTH BORE

JOSIAH served in one or another of the Vermont regiments until the end of the war, and was retired from the service with the rank of captain. He bought a right of land under a Vermont charter in the then almost uninhabited township of Danvis, and again began pioneer life in the heart of a wilderness.

Again the quick resonant strokes of his axe were echoed from side to side of a widening clearing. He rejoiced in the conquest of the forest giants, venerable patriarchs, concerning whose fate he felt no sentimental emotion. He let a flood of sunlight down upon fresh acres of virgin soil, and out of their roughness moulded grainfield and meadow. He reared the log walls of a new home, soon made truly a home by the presence of his wife. The brood of younger

Torreys found in it a home also, to which they gave willing and helpful hands until they were well-grown boys and girls, able to shift for themselves.

Josiah was again an owner of oxen, also of cows and a horse, and a flock of long-legged, bare-bellied sheep that ranged the woods as untamed as deer except when fear of wolves and bears became more terrible than fear of man, or deep snow and starvation made shed, fold, and fodder more desirable than freedom.

The sheep and young cattle were turned out to range the budding and blossoming woods, and their owner was out one day with his rifle to look after their welfare, when he heard the scared bleating of the flock, mingled with the spasmodic jangle of the leader's bell. As they came tearing down the mountain path, close upon the heels of the hindermost, the cause of their flight, a gaunt she bear galloped at top speed, her faded ragged coat fluttering like the tatters of a beggar. The sheep swerved aside to pass Josiah when they saw him, but she held straight on, and when he fired, inflict-

ing a slight wound in her head, she charged furiously upon him. He swung the gun aloft and brought it down with all his might. By good luck that he was truly thankful for he struck the beast a blow on the skull that checked her onslaught. Another brought her down quite stunned, so that he had no trouble to dispatch her ; but it was the last service of the rifle. The barrel was bent, the stock broken past mending, so that it was only a question of a new gun of some sort.

Arguing the question with himself, his wife the audience, he said : “ If I got tu be sech a blunderin’ ol’ numbskull I can’t git a bead on a bear’s head three rod off, I better git me su’tthin’ I can shoot buckshot in — a’ ol’ Queen’s arm or a ‘pateraro,’ mebbby! By the Lord Harry, she wa’n’t three rod, an’ a-comin’ stret at me ! But she was a-bobbin’ up an’ down, ju’ like a sawmill gate. It don’t signify, though, I’d ort tu ha’ fetched her. Fact on ’t is, I guess I can’t shoot a rifle no more — don’t practycee none. Guess I ’ll git me a smooth-bore — it ’ll be handy for pigins, an’ shoot a ball well

'nough for what bear an' deer an' varmints I run on tu naowerdays. If the' was any sech thing as fixin' up ol' 'Sartin Death' I would n't think o' nothin' else, but she's past prayin' for," he sighed ruefully, regarding the bent barrel, the broken lock, and splintered stock.

The result was that after fully setting forth the case of each weapon, he made a pilgrimage to the shop of Thomas Hill in Charlotta, the most famous gunsmith of the region; and after long consultation with that cunning craftsman, he ordered the building of a sixteen-gauge smooth-bore, with four-foot barrel, brass mountings, curled maple stock of rifle pattern, with patch box. He awaited the appointed time of completion with the degree of patience that usually attends the gun lover while he waits possession of a new weapon, and, knowing the value of a craftsman's promise, added a week's grace thereto.

Then he haltered the two-year-old heifer that was to be the price, trade being then chiefly conducted by barter, and set forth on foot, leading the heifer.

The gun proved to be all that was promised and more than was expected. It was a beauty, according to the fashion of the day ; it made a target almost as good as a rifle at twenty rods, and patterns with both coarse and fine shot that were all that could be desired. Josiah Hill was pleased enough with the gun to give it ungrudged praise, and proud to have so skillful and honest a workman as its maker for a namesake. So treading more lightly with this easiest of burdens on his shoulder, he set forth on his homeward journey, now making a target of a white patch on a beech trunk, now of an unwary crow, now of a pigeon just arrived from so far south that it had green wild grapes in its crop, while in Danvis woods the vines were but just in bloom.

He was at the beginning of the last mile, when he brought down one of these travelers from afar, and debating a moment whether he should reload with shot or ball decided on the latter, so that he might, as soon as he reached home, show Ruby how well the new smooth-bore could fill the place of the rifle. As he was returning the ram-

rod to its pipes, his roving eyes caught the lithe movement of some animal where the next turn of the road closed the forest-walled vista. His first thoughts were that it was a deer, and that it was out of season. Then he saw that, though it was of the color, it was not of the form of a deer. It was a panther sneaking along at a loose-jointed, cat-like trot, halting now and then to look backward with intent, alert eagerness; then resuming its slouching advance.

Josiah brought the gun to his shoulder, but could not find a certain aim at the distance, though that was not more than twenty rods. So he waited, with his head a little raised and gun muzzle lowered, for the animal to come within closer range. At fifteen rods it halted and looked backward again, and then as Josiah aimed at the curved side just behind the shoulder, it sprang lightly to the roadside, faced about, and swiftly climbed the trunk of a great maple to the first large limb that stretched out above the road, upon which it crouched, eagerly watching in the direction from which it had come.

“A-layin’ for suthin’ — one o’ my idgit

y'erlin's, mebby," Josiah whispered to himself, the eye and aim following every movement, only diverted for an occasional quick glance down the road. The last of these revealed a glimpse of a checkered blue and white sunbonnet and the flutter of a brown homespun gown, and then Ruby appeared in full view, picking her way along the edge of a muddy road, not thirty yards beyond the tree where the panther crouched, watching her with cruel, eager eyes — ears pricked, the end of the tail twitching nervously, and hinder paws nestling under the belly for the leap.

"Ruby! Ruby! Stand still where you be, for God's sake!" he cried out in a sharp, strained voice that compelled her to stand stock still before she comprehended whose it was or whence it came.

The panther turned the glare of its yellow eyes full upon him at the sound; the long barrel trembled a little as it was brought to an aim, then became steady as a rock under the strain of the tense muscle, and obedient to the flash of priming spat out its shaft of fire. A yell of pain and rage shot through the boom of the report and echo as the pan-

ther, pierced through the heart, lurched aimlessly from its perch and came down a-sprawl and half lifeless midway between Josiah and his wife.

Still calm and collected, he began reloading as he stepped forward a pace, closely watching the great cat blindly biting and clawing the earth, and writhing and rebounding in all the lithe contortions of feline death throes. The last snarling gasp went out, the muscular limbs stiffened, quivered and relaxed, but he did not go nearer the motionless tawny form until his piece was reloaded. Then, with thumb on the cock and finger on the trigger, he advanced and stirred it with his foot. Not a muscle gave a responsive twitch, and he went over to Ruby, sitting in a dumb daze, clutching the leaves with rigid hands, never moving until, when she saw her husband so near the terrible beast, she made an involuntary warning gesture.

“Thank the good Lord, Ruby!” he cried, all of a tremble now, and his voice shaking as he knelt down beside her; and she, with her head on his shoulder, fell to weeping.

“I do’ know what made me, but I consaited you’d be a-comin’, an’ I was a-comin’ aout tu meet you.”

“An’ I was a-comin’ jest in the nick o’ time, an’ blessed be this gun, for she saved ye. We’ll call her ‘Deliverance.’ Ju’ look what a beauty she be! There, don’t ye cry ontu her — salty tears’ll rust her.”

The smooth-bore, having done such saving service, was ever after a prime favorite, and a weapon of great renown in the township. Her owner achieved a wider fame as an expert marksman, woodsman, and hunter. He was famous as the slayer of three panthers, and more deer fell to his gun than to any other. Many wolves and bears he trapped and shot, and as these larger animals became scarce he got at great pains a hound of Peleg Sunderland’s noted breed, — a gaunt blue-mottled dog, most melodious and far-sounding of tongue, whose face grew more serious year by year with pondering on the wiles of the cunning fox.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PATRIARCH OF DANVIS

JOSIAH HILL did not neglect husbandry for sport, and never became a shiftless hunter, good for nothing in aught else. Out of primeval roughness he wrought smooth fields, his well-tended crops were bountiful, his flocks and herds thrived. No house was better provided nor more neatly kept than his, nor resounded more constantly with the musical droning of the great wheel and the livelier whir and beat of the flax wheel.

As the years went by, to these household sounds were added the babble of children's voices. Four sturdy boys, Ethan, Joseph, 'Member, and Kenelm, played and thrived around Josiah's cheerful fireside until that fatal epidemic that so baffled the skill of early doctors and swept away so many children of the pioneers proved fatal to all but Joseph. The father never spoke of this

great loss, though it was always a deep and unforgotten sorrow. If his remaining son ever fell short of his wishes, he fully believed the other boys would have grown to the full measure of all his desires. Joseph Hill inherited nothing of his father's aggressiveness, nor indeed any of his traits but kindness of heart. Apparently he had drawn his characteristics from some remote forgotten ancestor, some stolid English yeoman who had been slowly moved to emigrate to the New World for conscience' sake. The transplanted Puritan remained an Englishman, but his descendants became slowly differentiated from him in more nervous alacrity of manner and in speech, a dropping of the throaty burr, and a nasal drawl attaching itself to the twisted vowels.

Neighboring homesteads drew closer around Josiah's: those of Elisha Peggs, the shoemaker; the Lovels, the Goves, the Puringtons, the Bordens, and Briggses; the staid Quaker folk, the Bartletts — to all of whom he was a kind neighbor, helpful in sickness and the many privations of pioneer life, rough tongued, but soft hearted.

When Timothy Lovel fell sick of a fever, it was Josiah Hill who rallied all the neighbors within two miles to do the sick man's haying; and Timothy, worried almost to death's door by the thought of his unfinished work, was made happy and set on the road to health when told that it was all done, the log barn full of hay and five good stacks in the meadow. Every one had a logging-bee when the felled trees were ready for piling, but Josiah was first at all, organizing the work and keeping all hands at it till it was finished, before the inevitable black bottle went its rounds oftener than necessary, and skylarking and practical joking began too soon.

Once when, early in the day, Jerry Morrison was overcome in too frequent bouts with this sable antagonist and was laid behind a log heap to recover, some of the jokers of the company rubbed his milk-white oxen, the pride of his heart, as black as jet with smut from the charred logs. In due time Nature's great restorer got Jerry upon his unsteady legs, and he meandered home, his oxen none the less tractable for their outward metamorphose.

“Say, Betsey, look a’ here!” he called to his wife, as he came to an unsteady halt before his own door and brought his oxen to a stand with a “Whoa, Snowball! Whoa, Silver! Back, ish! If this ’ere ’s me, someb’dy or ’nother ’s got my oxen. If it hain’t me, where in thunder be I gone tu?”

In the October evenings every farm had its husking-bee, an industrial merrymaking in high favor with the young folks and matchmaking mothers. The uncertain light sprinkled from the tin lanterns, the deep shadows, the continual rustle of the corn leaves and husks, were great aids to the bashful wooers.

When the young orchards came into bearing, paring-bees became as common and as popular entertainments, — a way of making work light with many hands. Quiltings were more the affairs of matrons and maids, but the men were in demand when the “quilt was shaken,” and dancing was in order.

In winter there were spelling schools in the log schoolhouse that Josiah had been instrumental in building, and he even taught school in one winter when no one else could

be found better fitted for the place. In his youth he had learned to read and write, and had ciphered to the Rule of Three in the district school of his old Connecticut home, thereby being qualified to lead or drive the youth of Danvis one winter's journey in the path of learning. The schoolhouse was furnished with rough desks and seats for the larger scholars, while the smaller ones were provided with two long benches of slabs supported on rough-hewn legs driven into holes on the bark sides of the slab. There was a huge stone fireplace in one end of the room, by which an attempt was made to warm it, with the result of roasting those who sat near, while those who sat far away were freezing.

In the bitterest weather there was a continual movement of the frozen and the thawed to and from the fire, occasioning considerable disorder. Nevertheless Josiah's scholars learned obedience as they stumbled along the rough pathway in pursuit of the three R's. Abner Borden, standing in the reading class, balanced himself on one leg, and slowly scratched it with the other foot

as he spelled and respelled a puzzling word to himself.

“Skip it an’ go ’long!” his next classmate whispered.

“Skip it an’ go ’long,” Abner repeated, in his high-pitched reading voice.

“Don’t you know what b-a-r-r-e-l spells?” the master asked, when the laughter subsided. “What does your father put his cider intu?”

A great light broke upon Abner’s intellect, and he blurted out, “Hunh! int’ the bung!”

“Master, may I speak?” a scholar asked eagerly, after a stolen glance out of the window one day in early winter, and getting permission, reported that he had just seen Mr. Briggs’s dog tree a bear not forty rods from the schoolhouse. When the master was satisfied of the fact by ocular proof, he sent the discoverer for the long smooth-bore, powder horn, and bullet pouch; and when it was brought and carefully loaded, he dismissed school for half an hour, and with all the scholars at his heels went out and shot the bear. He turned over the bounty

and skin to the committee, to be applied on school expenses.

Josiah had not been many years settled in Danvis when his old comrade Kenelm Dalrymple came to him broken with age, infirm and homeless; but the latter no longer when he reached this hospitable shelter.

"I useter 'most wish, when I was wanderin' hither an' yon wi'aout kith or kin or friend, I could come tu my own ag'in," he said, sitting in comfort by the glowing hearth, with his pipe ablazt; "but I guess I'm better off here 'an I would be in boughten clo'es, a-lordin' on 't or tryin' tu, for I reckon a Yankee would n't make no great fist on 't. Seventy-five or eighty year amongst 'em have pooty nigh made me one on 'em."

Then following Ruby with his eyes until she left the room, "You did make a lucky hit when you got her, boy! But I 'spect it all come o' my puttin' ye on guard ag'in' 'em. It made ye kerful a-choosin'."

"The' wa'n't no ch'ice," Josiah protested. "We had tu an' so we did — that 's all."

Yet Kenelm could scarcely believe that

he was not entitled to some credit for Josiah's selection.

He could not be reconciled by any argument to his pupil's abandonment of the rifle for the smooth-bore, which he held in utter contempt, though he would sometimes condescend to use Josiah's, and always came home blaming its inaccuracy for the fair shots missed.

His days went by in tranquil enjoyment, and at last, as he dozed in his seat by the fireside, he passed into the profounder sleep of death, and came to his own in the land of the leal.

Josiah was the first captain of militia in his town, and held the office long; for though he was a martinet, his company was the best drilled in the regiment, — a distinction of which the members were too proud to depose their old commander, whose scolding had brought them to its achievement.

He started with them for Plattsburgh, but could get no farther than Burlington, where he fretted and fumed till the roar of battle ceased, and the news of the glorious victory came; and then he wondered how it was gained without his aid.

CHAPTER XIV

THE APPARITION OF GRAN'THER HILL

WHEN Josiah Hill had lived beyond the allotted life of man, he was still a marvel of health and vigor. There were days when he felt amiss, but they were like the petty ailments of a child, recovered from without apparent loss of vitality. These slight attacks were always a cause of anxiety to his family and friends, who were then forced to realize how closely his footsteps inevitably tended toward the bounds of the undiscovered country. They never alarmed Gran'ther Hill, though he was impatient of the alarm of others. He had faced death so often and in so many forms, that it seemed not worth making an ado about, — a small affair which need concern no one but himself. He was like some ancient cliff-rooted evergreen whose hold on the thin soil and deep-grooved crevices seemed to tighten with every storm that assailed it.

It was near the middle of July, and haymaking in Danvis was well under way. Even Joseph Hill was hard at it, as he said, and about nine o'clock of a morning that promised an unbroken hay-day was walking at a leisurely pace along the shaven sward between the standing grass on the left and the yet unwilted swath on his right. His hired help, Pelatiah Gove and Antoine Bisette, were mowing around a piece on the farther side of the ten-acre meadow; but he preferred to "carry his swaths," which gave his back long intervals of rest from bending, and afforded opportunities of sweetening toil with scraps of conversation when a neighbor passed along the highway, to whose border he returned, to strike in anew after the slow and restful walk. Now, as he sauntered along, his scythe hanging easily on his arm, he contemplated with a yeoman's honest pride the broad, even path he had mown, and the straight, regular swath of herd's-grass dappled with the yellow and white of daisies, and blushing with purple clover-heads and scarlet splashes of over-ripe strawberries. He kicked it aside to

see if it was neatly "p'inted aout," then stooped to pick up a tempting bunch of strawberries.

"Sam Hill!" he exclaimed, nibbling them from the stem as he resumed his deliberate progress. "Hain't the' snarls on 'em! Why, M'ri' an' Ruby might gather a ten-quart pailf'l on 'em right aout 'n the swaths, — seems 's 'ough they might, 'most. I snum, I 'd stop an' pick some on 'em myself, if I hed me a dish an' wa'n't so 'tarnal busy."

When he reached the edge of the field, Pelatiah and Antoine began sharpening their scythes at the farthest corner of their lessening parallelogram; and as his ear caught the sound he dropped the end of his snath upon the ground, drew the emery-clad wooden "rifle" from the long pocket of his tow-cloth trousers, and, with intent eyes and a critical left thumb on the scythe's edge, began whetting it from heel to point.

"If they spend half o' the' time raspin' the' ol' peahooks, guess I c'n 'ford tu tech up mine a leetle mite, seems 's 'ough," he said, as his blade rang an echo to theirs.

“It’s a dollar a day, an’ no hangin’ for stealin’.”

The bobolinks were in their gay motley plumage, and as jolly as became such attire. Their songs mingled with the musical clangor of the whetted scythes, as the gay minstrels hung on vibrant wings above their brooding mates, or swayed on the nodding herd’s-grass heads. A meadow lark, perched on a haycock, turning his escutcheoned breast to the sun, uttered notes as metallic as those the scythes gave forth, but less musical. Flashing through the foliage of a roadside elm, an oriole broke the sweet, plaintive cadence of his brief song with a discordant chatter, evoked perhaps by some intruder, perhaps by a disappointment over the unmusical promise of his unfledged offspring’s three lugubrious notes reiterated with tiresome monotony, while the silent mother came and went in an endless round of food gathering and delivering.

“What’s a-troublin’ of ye, this mornin’, Mr. Hangbird?” Joseph inquired, looking towards the elm. Presently he descried the canopy of a blue umbrella slowly rising

above the crest of a hill. "Wal, I snore, if 't hain't Mis' Pur'n't'n," he declared, after a few moments' study of the approaching figure as it became more fully revealed. "Wonder where she 's a-shoolin' tu. Up tu aour haouse, like 's not. Like 'nough up t' Solon's, I d' know." He laid down the scythe, and refreshed himself with a draught of switchel from a wooden canteen which he drew from its covering of grass in a shady fence corner. This once popular but now obsolete summer drink of temperate hay-makers was compounded of molasses and water, with a dash of vinegar and a spice of ginger, and was supposed to be less hurtful than water to heated men. Therefore Joseph, considering his liability to "git het," providently supplied himself with it. Having quenched his thirst, he rasped his face with a red-and-yellow cotton handkerchief carried in the crown of his palm-leaf hat, and leaned upon the fence to await the coming of the passer-by. Presently she waddled into short range of speech, her flushed face and labored breath seeming to diffuse added heat in the fervid atmosphere. Her eyes

were intent on the smooth footpath between the ditch and the wheel track, and she was not aware of Joseph's presence till he accosted her.

"Mornin', Mis' Pur'n't'n. Where on this livin' airth be you p'inted for, this hot mornin'?"

"Why, sakes alive!" she gasped, coming to a ponderous, quaking halt. "What's the use o' scarin' anybody aouten the' seben senses? My, I never seen ye till I heard ye, an' I putty nigh jumped aouten my shoes. I'm rwusted, an' I'm comin' over there int' the shade. I was just a-thinkin' I'd ortu seddaown an' rest me. Ther' hain't no bumblebees ner was's nests ner nothin', is the'?"

"Don't seem tu be none," said Joseph, after casual inspection of the premises.

With this assurance she descended into the dry ditch, and, assisting herself with a pudgy hand on her uplifted knee, climbed up the opposite bank, set her open blue umbrella upside down on the ferns and buttercups, and seated herself on a convenient cradle knoll in the shadow of the fence-side raspberry bushes.

“So you ’re a-hayin’ of it, be ye?” she said, peeping between the rails into the meadow. “Wal, *he* is tew. Ho, hum, sussy day! I allers du dread hayin’ dretf’l, it does make sech a lot o’ work for the women folks; men folks does eat so, an’ so many on ’em! Haow’s your father? We heerd las’ night ’at he was kinder failin’, an’ I told him I’d got tu gwup an’ see fer myself; an’ so this mornin’ I told Sis she’d got tu git along some way, an’ I jest put on my things, an’ off I come; for I knowed if I couldn’t du nothin’ much wi’ my han’s, feeble’s I be, I c’ld chirk him up some, an’ Mis’ Hill, which she must hev her han’s putty nigh full an’ anxious in her mind. Haow’d ye say he was?”

“Oh, wal,” said Joseph slowly, embracing the first opportunity to answer, “father hain’t not tu say sick, an’ then ag’in he hain’t ezackly what you might call well. He’s ben a lee-tle mite off ’m the hooks tew three days; the hot weather’s kinder took a holt on him, I guess. I don’t b’lieve but what he ’ll come raound all right ag’in in a day er tew.”

Mrs. Purington's sunbonnet shook with funereal solemnity, and she heaved a deep sigh.

"Don't flatter yourself. At his time o' life, he's lieble tu go any minute; an' givin' way tu his temper the way he does, I don't 'spect nothin' but what he'll go in a fit o' the arteplack. It'll be terrible onpleasant tu hev him pass away right in hayin', a fun'r'l does break things up so. But we can't order sech things. My sakes, if there hain't a ripe rosb'ry!" as she spied the first ripe berry of its kind and reached forth to secure it. "Who 'd ever ha' thought o' rosb'ries gittin' ripe? Ho, hum, haow time does fly, an' aour lives is but a span! I mus' send Sis aout tu see 'f she c'n git 'nough fer a mess. I s'pose you give your father bwunset? An' prarbably you've hed him the darkter?"

"Wal, he's took some hisself," Joseph answered. "Ye can't ezackly give him nothin'. He won't let ye. No, he won't hev no darkter erless he'll bleed him, which there don't seem no sense in, seems's 'ough there wa'n't, 'cause, ye see, he hain't full-

blooded. It don't seem's if he'd hev the arteplack, sea'eely."

"You can't never tell," Mrs. Purington sighed. "It tackles fat an' lean. Time cuts daown all, bwuth gre't an' small. Is your grass tol'able good? His 'n is."

"Bunkum," Joseph declared with unwonted decision, which he hastened to qualify. "Leastways, consid'able more 'n middlin', for all the' 's lots o' strob'ries, which hain't a sign o' heavy grass. If it's baries ye want, you c'd pick up a bushil aouten the swaths. I'd know as a bushil, ezackly; fo', five, half dozen quarts, mebbly. Say, I swan, Mis' Pur'n't'n, the' is a was's nes' right in under the — le' me see — one, tew, three, fo', five — the fif' rail f'm the top, on the len'th right behind ye. Don't ye git scairt; go kinder easy, an' not wake 'em up."

She hesitated not on the manner of her departure, but rolled off her seat to the verge of the ditch, into which she dropped her feet, and, scrambling up the further bank on all fours, regained the road. There, resuming an upright position, she began vigorously to shake her skirts and cuff the sides of her sunbonnet.

“Wal, I b’lieve the’ hain’t none in my clo’es ner nothin’!” she exclaimed at last. “But wa’n’t I scairt, though? I be dretf’l ’feard o’ was’s an’ bees, they swell up so on me. I do’ know but I ’xposed some o’ my limbs, but you’ll hafter ’xcuse me on ’caount o’ the was’s nes’ an’ your father’s health. Naow, if you c’n git a holt o’ my umbrel, an’ tost it tu me, mebby I c’n git away ’thaout gittin’ stung tu death.”

Joseph grunted as he reached far across the fence to perform this service, and then, having recovered his breath, he said, “If you see bub, you jest tell him tu hurry up an’ come an’ shake aout this ’ere grass, an’ fer him tu fetch a fork, ’cause the’ hain’t none here. I do’ know why in tunket he don’t come, fer the dew’s ben off an haour.”

“Prarbably his mother’s a-keepin’ on him tu send fer the darkter or the neighbors. An’ I s’pose Josier begretches ev’y minute away f’m his gran’ther. He’ll miss him more’n ’most any of ye.” Then sheltering herself under the umbrella, Mrs. Purington resumed her laborious progress.

“Gosh, what a woman!” Joseph ejacu-

lated when he had watched her a moment. "Won't father give her hail Columby, though, if she gits tu mournin' over him!" Then his eyes wandered to the flat-pressed herbage of the cradle knoll and the inverted gray cone beneath the adjacent fence rail, and he chuckled wheezily, "I guess it's an ol' last year's one, arter all. My, if it hed n't 'a' ben! Wal, I s'pose I must buckle tu." So after trimming out the fence corner with a few short strokes, he struck into his swath with long, regular sweeps whose graceful movement was strangely in contrast to his ordinary turtle-like motions.

With a like movement, yet each with a distinctive if slight difference, the tall angular young American and the lithe and graceful little Canadian swung their scythes in unison, with one cropping swish of the cutting stroke that piled half a summer's growth of stalk, leaf, and blossom in a lengthening line of common ruin, and disturbed labor and revel of busy bee and idle moth. With one faint ring like bells of fairyland, the two scythes swung back to the standing grass. There was no break in

these regularly recurrent sounds, except when a corner was reached, or the scythes were whetted, or there was brief decisive battle with a swarm of bumblebees that made the air seethe with their angry murmur, and hot with the pungent odor of their wrath. Angry buzz and burnt honey incense faded out when the bees were trampled to death, and the conquerors sucked their meagre spoils out of the brown combs.

Thus an hour or more passed with the haymakers, while the bobolinks sang their jubilant medley, the oriole mingled music with scolding, the meadow lark struck his brief metallic notes, and the kingbird uttered sharp, accelerated monotony of clatter as he poised in rapid survey of the grassy coverts or swooped upon his insect game. Then there came a sudden untimely blast of a dinner-horn, sounding an imperative call in its first note, prolonged to a wail of distress, and ending in sputtering failure of breath and tense lips.

Antoine stopped at the end of a stroke, and turned inquiring eyes and ears toward the house, while Pelatiah, in the lead, con-

scientiously carried out his swath before he stopped to look and listen in the direction of the unexpected signal.

“Bah gosh!” Antoine exclaimed, letting out his restrained breath after a moment of silence. “Ah guess Marri got hees clock go too fas’, prob’ly, or less de bee was swarmin’, an’t he prob’ly?”

“Wal, ’t ain’t nowher’s nigh noon,” Pelatiah said, looking up to the sun. “If it’s bees, they hain’t wuth fussin’ with. ‘A swarm in July hain’t wuth a fly.’ Wonder what the rip is?”

“Boys, did ye hear the horn?” their employer asked anxiously, as he came wading through the grass toward them. “Le’s hyper up tu the haouse. I’m afeard the’ ’s suthin’ the matter.”

Pelatiah at once slipped his scythe under the swath and was ready to accompany him, but Antoine whetted his scythe and again struck in.

“Hain’t ye goin’ with us?” Joseph asked.

“No,” he answered, with abrupt decision. “Ah’ll an’t never wan’ go where anybody

sick, an' if dey goin' to dead, oh! mon Dieu, no!" and he applied himself to his work with nervous diligence, while the others went their way.

Joseph Hill's usually cheerful face was shadowed by a cloud of anxiety, as he set forth toward the house at his best pace across the intervening strip of cleared meadow, where the new-fangled, half-dis-trusted revolving horse-rake, just from Morrison's shop, lay in idle conspicuity, with its double rows of wooden teeth shining in the sun. Its owner gave it but a passing glance that brought no thrill of proud possession, but rather a twinge of remorse for having bought it against the will of his father, who spurned it as a "consarned flip-perty-flop, rattle-trap, Tory thingum-a-jig, with teeth a-p'intin' both ways." It seemed to Joseph that his legs were never so short nor the stubble so slippery, especially when his active companion quickly overtook him.

"Father's hed a wuss spell, I'll bet ye what's the matter," he panted, struggling to keep abreast of Pelatiah. "He did n't git mad nary oncte this mornin', which it

showed he wa'n't a-feelin' jest right some-ways. I'd a grea' deal livser hev him 'an tu not tu. Lord, haow I should miss him if he should be took away!" Joseph was obliged to get the cotton handkerchief from his hat and wipe the sweat from his eyes, for the house, though now only ten rods off, was swimming in a watery haze that made doors and windows indistinguishable.

Mrs. Purington toiled up the path leading to the kitchen door of the Hill homestead, bestowing a glance of severe disapproval on the ill-timed efflorescence of the hollyhocks and the gorgeousness of the tiger lilies, then lowered her umbrella as a shield against the attack of an old hen who charged upon her furiously through a brood of frightened chicks, more endangered by defender than by invader.

"There, there, you plagued ol' fool, you," she addressed her baffled adversary, who was now making a prodigious fuss of scratching and clucking to collect her scattered brood, one member of which had been nearly trampled to death under her own feet. "You see what comes o' not tendin'

t' y' own business." Mrs. Purington moved forward, running a critical eye over a flock of older chickens now in the ugliness and imbecility of half growth, and uttering yelps of perpetual discontent when they were not making awkward sallies in pursuit of a moth or a grasshopper. "They hain't no forreder 'n aourn, nor no more on 'em," she remarked as she reached the door, and, furling her umbrella, she bent forward to look and listen before she entered.

There was a sound of water briskly splashed and a squeaky breaking of leaf stalks, of quick footsteps moving intermittently to and fro, mingled with a cautious clatter of the stove and the contented bubbling of a boiling pot that exhaled a savory odor of cooking pork, which the visitor sniffed with satisfaction when she saw that Ruby Hill was washing beet greens at the sink. She mentally formulated the bill of fare and a declaration of intention : —

"B'iled pork an' beet greens! I'm goin' tu stay tu dinner, if it is hayin'." Then she wheezily announced herself.

"Mornin', Marier! Wal, here I be,

what the' is left on me, arter br'ilin' in the sun, tu say nothin' o' raslin' wi' was's. My, if 't ain't hot!" Gran'ther Hill's great splint-bottomed chair received her unaccustomed weight with a protesting creak as Maria turned from the stove to her guest, her face changing from the frown of heat-battling to an expression of surprise, while Ruby cast a frightened glance, a nod, and a murmured salutation over her shoulder.

"Why, for all this worl'!" said Maria. "That's right, set ri' daown and rest ye. Le' me take your bunnit. Pretty well, be ye, an' all of 'em at hum?"

"No, you need n't take my bunnit. I'll jest hang it on the cheer," said Mrs. Purington with the air of a martyr, as she fumbled at her bonnet-strings. "I don't s'pose I e'n stop long erless it seems ne'ssary; but it did seem's if I mus' come, if 't wa'n't only tu call. Be you feelin' putty scrump-tious, Ruby? I should n't s'pose you would, a-growin' so. It hain't healthy tu grow so fast. I should think you'd let aout the tuck in her dress, Marier. My sakes, if there hain't a beet half's big as a hen's aig!

An' we hain't hed us a mess yit. No, sir, not a green, sence caowslops an' dand'lierns went by. I s'pect aour beets hain't ben wed as they 'd ortu ben. He hain't no hand for a garding, like your father Hill. Ho, hum, sussy day! But I s'pose he's goddone wi' all that. You won't hev no sech beets next year. Haow does he 'pear tu be?" sinking her voice to a gasping whisper. "I come up a puppus tu enquire. We heard yist'day 'at he was terrible mis'-able."

"Why, no," Maria answered in a lowered voice, seating herself in front of her visitor and adjusting the tall comb in her back hair, "he don't seem tu be bad off. He hed a kinder poor turn day 'fore yist'-day, an' he's ben keepin' consid'able quiet sence. He's ben sleepin' 'most all the mornin'. Bub's in there a-keepin' the flies off of him."

Mrs. Purington shook her head solemnly, and slowly lifted herself by the arms of the chair. Then, with a cautionary hand raised to enjoin silence, she waddled carefully across to the bedroom door and peered in

long and anxiously. Then she disappeared within, to come forth presently in haste, with an awe-stricken countenance, and in a voice befitting it she said, "Marier Hill, he's a dyin' man! He lays there julluk a lawg, an' he's slipped daown in the bed; an' I took a holt o' one o' his feet, an' it's jest as cold as a stun, an' bloated up jest as hard as a stick o' wood. I tell ye he hain't long for this world! You jest come an' look at him!"

Maria followed her in a tremor of alarm, and poor Ruby, sick with horror of the mysterious presence which seemed about to confront her, hovered close in the rear, afraid to follow and afraid to be left alone.

"You c'n see for yourself," Mrs. Purington whispered, with constrained calmness. "You see that 'ere fly a-walkin' on his nose, an' him never a-winkin'. You see haow his fingers keeps a-workin', an' he's all slid daown in the bed, an' his feet as col' as chunks o' ice. I tell ye he's struck wi' death, an' you hedn't ortu lose a minute a-callin' in Joseph an' 'mongst 'em, if they 're tu see him a livin' man. It's arteplack;

jest what I told Joseph 'ould take his father, as I come along."

The grim face of the veteran was unwontedly serene as he lay breathing heavily in the deep sleep of age, and now a smile flickered across it like a glint of sunlight on the wintry ruggedness of a mountain, as if he had pleasant dreams or happy visions. His favorite grandson and namesake sat beside him idly brushing the flies away with a feathery asparagus stalk, tired of his inactive duty, and wishing his grandfather would awake and tell a story. But now he turned a wondering, scared face toward the visitor; then, as he comprehended the awful import of her words, he dropped the brush across the bed, and, lightly touching the nearest brown and withered old hand with his browner, grimy young fingers, he buried his face in the patchwork quilt, repeating silently again and again a fervent, untaught prayer, amid smothered, choking sobs: "O God, don't let gran'ther die! Don't ye! Don't ye!"

He did not hear Mrs. Purington's whispered errand: "Josier, your father tol' me

tu tell you tu come ri' daown int' the medder, an' go tu shakin' aout the swaths, but I hain't the heart tu." He heard his mother's rapidly retreating footsteps click on the doorstone, and then the untimely blast of the dinner-horn smote his ear like a funeral knell.

Gran'ther Hill half opened his eyes in an unseeing stare, then closed them and lapsed again into quiet sleep.

"He don't take no notiete o' nothin'," Mrs. Purington sighed.

Before long Josiah heard the guarded clump of his father's and Pelatiah's boots upon the kitchen floor; then, by the restrained, labored breathing and whispered inquiries and responses, he knew that they were crowded into the little bedroom whose narrow confines Mrs. Purington's portly presence had seemed to fill already to their utmost capacity.

It was not apparent to Joseph that any great change had occurred in his father's condition, but Mrs. Purington having become an authority on mortuary affairs through frequent attendance at deathbeds

and funerals, he had no idea of questioning her opinions.

"It seems 's 'ough I'd got tu speak tu him," he whispered, his face working with painfully restrained emotion.

"The' hain't no use o' disturbin' his last moments," Mrs. Purington whispered authoritatively; and Joseph tried to appease his filial yearning by a clumsy, mannish adjustment of the quilt, which was viewed with severe toleration by Mrs. Purington. Pelatiah heaved a few sympathetic sighs, and retired to the kitchen, emphasizing each careful footfall by a downward sway of head and body, till he reached a chair, and carefully lowered himself into it. After a vain attempt to engage his mind in the study of the almanac which hung by the clock, he tried the better plan of doing something helpful, and made separate, supposedly noiseless journeys to the well and cistern to replenish the water-pails, although he had found neither empty. With the same purpose, Ruby strove to employ herself, wondering if it would be decorous to begin setting the table, and wishing she might be

sent to summon the younger children home from school, to help her bear the misery of this awful waiting, until both were called into the bedroom by an imperative gesture of Mrs. Purington.

There was crowded standing-room for the solemn company between the bedstead, the oilcloth-covered light-stand, and the cherry-wood chest of drawers, whereon lay the worn and ancient family Bible, open at one of the stormiest chapters of the Old Testament. It might have seemed to some that a recently developed turn for Biblical research was one of the most alarming symptoms of Gran'ther Hill's illness. In an unstable position on the edge of the chest there was an unfinished axe-helve awaiting the last touches of the veteran's hands. Last night's candle stood on the stand, the extinguisher half revealing a portentous winding-sheet which had formed during the last burning ; and even while Mrs. Purington silently called attention to this ominous sign still another was given. A phœbe-bird hovered a moment at the open window, then flew in and caught a fly in an airy

loop of flight that ended in a misjudged dash against the raised sash. In attempting to wallow her way around from the foot of the bed to expel the fluttering intruder, Mrs. Purington struck an end of the axe-helve, and it fell to the floor with a sharp, resonant clatter that aroused the old man.

With wide-opened eyes he cast a glance of stern inquiry around upon the sad-faced group. "What in time be ye all a-gawpin' at?" he sternly demanded in a strong voice. "Be ye all dumb, or why don't ye answer?"

Mrs. Purington ventured to take upon herself the office of spokeswoman, and said with awful solemnity, "Capting Hill, we thought you was a-dyin', an' I hed Marier call the men folks."

"Ye did, hey? An' what if I was? Did n't you s'pose I c'd 'tend tu it? Called in the men folks from hayin'? If I'd ha' got killed tu Hubbar't'n or Ben-nin't'n, du you s'pose they'd ha' quit fightin' an' stood 'raound tu gawp at me a-dyin'? An' 't would ha' ben a 'tarnal sight more consequence then 'an 't is naow."

"Your feet was jes' as cold as stuns,"

Mrs. Purington added, as she ran a groping hand beneath the bedclothes, "an' so they be naow."

"You hain't got a holt o' no foot," Gran'ther Hill chuckled hoarsely. "It's a free-stun Marier put in tu warm 'em las' night." And drawing up his knee, he gave a vigorous kick that tumbled the stone out with a dull thud upon Mrs. Purington's fat foot, and drew from her an agonized shriek. "I'm glad on 't, I swear I be, ye ol' carri'n crow!" the old man roared in savage rejoicing. "Clear aouten here, the hull b'ilin' on ye! No, you don't wanten go," he added in a softer tone to Josiah, who was crying now for joy at the sudden and promising change in his grandfather's symptoms.

"It's awful, dretful! A man at your time o' life, wi' one foot in the grave!" Mrs Purington whimpered, as she limped out of the bedroom in the rear of the departing company.

"I hain't a man o' my time o' life, an' I hain't nary foot in nothin'," he growled after her, and, suiting action to his last words, he sat upright, and threw his sturdy old legs out of bed.

“Gi’ me my breeches, bub. Why, the ’tarnal fools scairt ye, did n’t they?” He put an unwontedly gentle hand on the tousled, sun-faded tow head. “There, don’t ye cry, sonny. They won’t git no fun’al aouten yer ol’ gran’ther till he ’s larnt ye tu shoot an’ tu ketch a traout, an’ hev lots o’ fun wi’ ye.”

Through tears and smiles, as in a shower and sunshine, the boy had a bright vision of his reënthroned idol.

“I ruther guess me an’ Pelatiah hed better hev us a cold bite,” Joseph said in a subdued voice, as he took a longing sniff of the fragrance of the boiling greens. “We can’t sca’cely ’ford tu wait for dinner, an’ it won’ ezackly pay tu come up a puppus for ’t quite so soon, it don’t seem’s ’ough. An’ we’ll take suthin’ ’long for Antwine. The pork an’ greens’ll be fust chop for supper.”

“Men folks hed ortu hev a su’stantial warm dinner, an’ so hed anybody ’at ’s ben ex’cisin’ a-walkin’,” said the visitor.

But the two men began eating their lunch standing at the pantry shelf, where it was

set by Maria, and, quickly finishing it, went afieid. No move was made toward getting dinner, and an angry growl was heard issuing from the bedroom. Casting a regretful look upon the boiling pots, Mrs. Purington hastily departed, with the umbrella under her arm, tying her sunbonnet as she walked down the path.

With but little help from his grandson, Gran'ther Hill donned his suit of homespun, and, with convincing thumps of his staff, stamped forth into the kitchen. His face wore a genial expression, nevertheless triumphant and defiant; and Josiah, following close at his heels, was radiant with joy, in spite of the fear that he might now be sent to the hayfield.

Maria and her daughter had set the untasted dishes of pork, greens, and potatoes to cool on the draughtiest shelf of the pantry, and were sitting in a bewilderment of unexpected rest when the old man entered.

"Wal, naow, you hain't never ben tu dinner, Marier?" he demanded, looking sharply at the clock, the cleared stove, and empty table. "So I skeered them back int' the

lot, did I?" he chuckled, when his daughter-in-law had explained the situation. "An' that 'ere Pur'n't'n womern, hes she cleared aout tew? Wal, I done almighty well. By the Lord Harry, I won't furnish no fun'als for that ol' carri'n crow's long's I c'n help it! An' mind ye, Marier, if ever I du die, don't ye let her know it for a week. I want tu cheat her aouten that fun. Lord, it always makes me swearin' mad tu see her a-lookin' at corpses as if she owned 'em! 'Viewin' the re-mains,' she calls it. Hunh! Or'n'ry, every-day dead folks hain't remains. All 'at ever you could see is there just's it allers was. If she 'd ha' ben tu Hubbar't'n er Bennin't'n er where Injins hed ben hellin' raound, she 'd ha' seen remains. Folks blowed all tu flinders, an' women wi' the' skelps tore off. Them's remains. Remains! The cussed ol' fat fool!" He shook out the words in a bass tremolo of anger, and then in a milder voice declared, "I smelt greens a-b'ilin', an' I want some on 'em. In the butt'ry, be they? No, you jes' keep yer settin', Marier, an' me an' bub'll help aourselves. Come on, bub."

“Seems ’s ’ough it’s most tew hearty victuals for anybody ’at’s feeble,” Maria suggested timidly.

“Sho, Marier! Gardin sass ’s the healthiest victuals the’ is. Don’t woo’chucks eat it? An’ did you ever hear tell o’ a woo’-chuck’s dyin’ erless he was killed? Who’s feeble? If bub is, he need n’t eat none ’thout he ’s a min’ ter.”

The pantry door closed behind the grand-sire and grandson, who at once gave themselves up so entirely to the business in hand that no sound was heard from that quarter but the clatter of knives and forks, the clink of the vinegar cruet, and an occasional clearing of Gran’ther Hill’s throat when it was too liberally irrigated with an overdose of vinegar. When at last they came forth, with satisfied faces and wiping their mouths with the backs of their hands, Josiah the younger at once went to roost on the edge of a chair, with his feet on the top round, and began to settle into torpid contentment. He was not long permitted to enjoy it, for his grandfather, after taking his own hat from its peg and putting it on, drew the

boy's tattered straw hat toward him from its latest place of deposit, with the point of his staff, and thrust it upon the owner's head with such force that the surprised youngster barely saved himself from pitching headlong upon the floor. When halfway across the room he halted a stumbling run, and turned to stare with dazed eyes between parted crown and brim on the grimly amused face of his grandfather.

"I 'spect your father wants ye daown 'n the medder," his mother suggested.

"He hain't a-goin' daown intu no medder erless I tell him tu. He 's a-goin' along wi' me," the aged autocrat announced, as he stamped and thumped his way to the door; and Josiah hoped that they might be going fishing, though the blazing heat promised no success.

"Why, father, you hain't never goin' aout in the heat o' the day, be ye? Where be you goin'? You hed n't ortu, old as you be an' sick as you 've ben."

"Old as I be?" he growled scornfully. "I'm younger 'n any on ye. Sick? I hain't ben sick. Hot? Don't ye s'pose a

man 'at 's lived in V'mont ever sence white folks come tu stay knows a leetle suthin' 'baout what sort o' weather he c'n gwaout in? 'T ain't hot. It's jest comft'ble, an' I hain't grease ner pitch. I guess I sha'n't melt. Where be I a-goin'? Mebby I'm a-goin' tu bary myself, an' mebby I'm a-goin' tu look up a good place tu. Come on, bub."

With his grandson at his heels, he marched down the dooryard path, supremely indifferent to the attack of the Dominique Amazon that charged at his lean shanks only to be poked contemptuously aside by a two-handed thrust of his staff; and his daughter-in-law, ready to cry with worry, watched him to the corner from which the road ran past the hayfield, where he was hidden by a group of cherry-trees, in which a throng of jealous robins and a pair of red-headed woodpeckers were bickering for the first reddening fruit.

"He 'll git het or sunstruck, an' everybody 'll blame it ontu me," she sighed, turning wearily away, and taking her apron from a chair-back with one hand, while with

the other she groped for a pin on the bosom of her gown.

"I tell ye, bub," Gran'ther Hill confided to his grandson, as he slackened his pace for his escort to come beside him, "I 'm a-goin' daown int' the medder tu show 'em haow tu hay it. Folks naowerdays do' know haow, erless they won't, but I 'll show 'em, or I 'll make 'em, bub." He stopped, and bent an impressive glance upon the boy's upturned face. "It 'll be suthin' for ye tu tell on, when ye git growed up, haow 't your gran'ther was a-dyin' in the fo'noon, an' went an' pitched hay in the art'noon." He chuckled hoarsely, and, after giving the idea time for digestion, continued, as he began an abstracted search in his pockets, "They hain't no kind of a team, your father an' that 'ere Gove boy an' that 'ere Frenchman. I don't see what Jozeff was a-thinkin' on tu hire him. They hain't goo' for nothin'. I know 'em. Blast 'em! When we went tu Canerdy an' fit for 'em, they jest humped up tu hum, ov' their pea soup an' inions, an' let us freeze an' starve an' du the fightin'. Ye could n't stir 'em up tu no patri'tism no

more 'n ye could stir up a chunk o' ice wi' a puddin'-stick, blast 'em! Oh, if a man won't fight for his natyve land for the love on 't, he won't du much a-hayin' for wages, you may depend on 't! Say, bub, I come off an' lef' my pipe on the manteltree shelf, an' I 'd ortu smuk. You clipper back an' git it, an' fill it wi' terbacker; an' ye can't light it, — it 'ould make ye siek; so you fetch me three four o' them hell-fire matches. The' hain't half so good as flint an' steel, but the' hain't no punk in the hull dumb, shif'less haouse. Naow clipper like a white-head, an' I'll just wait. An' don't ye let your ma'am know where we're a-goin'; she'll jes' tew," he called after Josiah, while he watched his agile steps with critical admiration, and commented to himself, "He 's a chip o' the ol' block! Jozeff took arter his mother in bein' slow an' easy. But she hed judgment, and Jozeff — wal — She hed 'straor'nary judgment when she was a gal. Why, she wa'n't on'y eighteen when she took me. Twenty year she's ben gone! Twenty year, an' me a-hengin' on yit, julluk an' oak leaf in winter, o' no use

for nothin'." His slow thoughts followed his slow, half-wistful gaze to the sunaccented burying-ground, and far beyond to the pale, sunlit sky above the mountain tops, and then wandered wearily back. "But I'm wuth a dozen naowerdays young folks yit," he declared, straightening himself energetically, and walking toward the corner of the road. Turning it, he came suddenly in view of Antoine, who was coming up the road, a few rods away.

It was not yet noon when Joseph and Pelatiah reached the hayfield, where Antoine had exchanged a scythe for a fork, and was tossing the swaths as if they were caught in the eddies of a sweetly odorous whirlwind. He took his luncheon in silence, with his employer's laconic remark that "the women folks wa'n't a-goin' tu git no reg'lar dinner tu-day," imagining in Joseph's sober face he read an answer to the question he would ask. If he wondered that the bereaved son should return to labor when he had so good an excuse for a respite from it, he accounted for this by the fact that toil blunts the edge of grief. The

far-resounding dinner-calls of conchs and horns at distant farmsteads faded out in the hot air to the silence which had held languorous sway since the bobolinks' riot of melody had ceased. The song of the oriole was hushed, with the monotonous plaint of his offspring; the sharp brief note of the meadow lark, like an arrow of sound, was no longer shot athwart the noontide heat, and there was no noisier stir of life than the drowsy boom of the bumblebee swelling above, and lapsing again to the voiceless level as the liveried gold-and-black forager blundered homeward or afield.

Antoine retired to the shade to rest and refresh himself. While he munched the generous but dry ration of bread and cold meat, he also slowly chewed the cud of meditation concerning the long life which he supposed had just come to a close, and his thoughts, addressed to himself, shaped themselves in his accustomed French-English speech:—

“De gran'père was gat great many hol'.
More as mos' hond'ed prob'ly, Ah guess.
Wen Ah 'll gat so much hol', prob'ly Ah 'll

been dead great many year. Ah 'll hope so if Ah 'll goin' be so hugly like he was! He so hugly Ah 'll was 'fraid of it, me! An' Ah 'll guess, seh, dis worl' was be more peaceably, for gat de hol' man aout of it! What dey goin' do where he gone prob'ly, hein? Wal, Ah 'll be glad dey gat it, an' Ah 'll hope dey an't send it back."

An overlarge mouthful of bread stuck in his throat, and he was seized with a sudden fear that a judgment had overtaken him. He struggled against it manfully, and, after several gasping elongations of his neck, got the better of the choking morsel, and cried out in bravado, "Yas, sah, Ah 'll glad dat hol' hugly was go, me, an' Ah 'll hope dey an't let it come back!" He could not help casting a scared glance behind him, but he saw only the serene landscape: the shorn meadow dotted with cocks and rumped with spread hay; the standing grass waving in the fitful gusts of the wind, and tossing the dandelion heads like foam bells on the waterless gray-green billows; the open-doored, gray barn with a row of silent swallows bickering on the ridge; the tasseled corn-

field; the rough pasture, and its idle groups of sheep and kine nooning in the shade of scattered trees; and beyond all, the green boundary of the mountain wall shimmering in the glare of sunlight. If the scene revealed naught to him of its serene beauty but the excellence of an ideal hay-day, there was nothing in it to alarm him, and, after a tepid draught of switchel, he gave himself the crowning consolation of a pipe. The last spark was quenching itself in the moist dregs when he was aroused by Joseph's moderate call.

“Wal, Antwine, I guess like 'nough, if you 're a-min' ter, you may gwup an' git the hosses an' the hay-riggin', an' ye can hitch the ol' mare on behind an' tow her 'long daown for tu hitch on the rake, if you 're a min' ter; guess the cult 'll foller all right!” The call came to him in a deliberate, monotonous tone whose high pitch was maintained with effort.

Antoine knocked the ashes out from his pipe on the toe of his moccasin, and, arising, set forth toward the house, not without some unwillingness to go alone into the dread pre-

cinets which, as he approached, seemed the more pervaded by an awed silence. As he turned the corner, he saw the subject of his thoughts materialize before him, and doubted not for an instant that the gaunt, tall figure and stern, pallid face were those of a being now belonging to another world. The recollection of his recent defiance of such a visitation surged back upon him in an overwhelming wave that seemed to drown his heart's life out of him. For an instant he felt his legs weakening and bending beneath him like thawing props of ice. He thought himself dying without time for prayer, and powerless to make the sign of the cross.

Then, with a sudden accession of strength, without force of will, but by mere instinct, he turned and ran as he never ran before. He marveled how and why he could go so swiftly with such terror withering him, even wondered if he were not standing still, while trees, fences, and breeze were streaming past him, with the dread form motionless behind him, or drawing nearer, nearer, with noiseless steps, and already reaching out to clutch him with cold fingers. But he was

assured by the dull pain that the pebbles inflicted on his moccasined feet, and he thanked the Virgin and every saint he could remember for the unasked aid that was invisibly bearing him onward.

The meadow fence was no barrier to his flight; his hand touched the top rail and his feet flew over like two bounding balls, and on he went, never slacking his pace, till he came to where Joseph and Pelatiah stood agape with wonder at his speed, and apprehensive of woeful tidings. Then he dropped upon his knees and began a prayer, whose fervor was not interrupted by the indrawing and outgoing of his labored breath, and he rapidly made the sign of the cross.

“Du for land o’ massy’s sake, Antwine, stop your dumb foolin’, an’ tell a feller what’s the matter. Can’t ye, or can’t ye?” Joseph demanded in a flutter of anxiety. But he could get no answer till he shook Antoine roughly by the shoulder, and said sharply, “Come, naow, quit your prayin’ long ’nough tu tell what ye want, so ’t someb’dy nuther c’n understand. What is ’t? Is father wuss?”

“Oh, oui, oui, oui, wus as loup garou. Hees ghos' come at me on de road. Oh, he scare me dead. Oh, mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! Oh, what for you' fader an' let me 'lone wen he'll dead ! He chase me on de road ! Oh, he was awf'ly hugly hol' ghos' !”

A smile of enlightenment dawned upon Joseph's bewildered face after a survey of Antoine's recent course.

“Oh, Sam Hill, Antwine !” his words shaken with laughter. “Father hain't half so dead as you be ; don't look's 'ough he was. 'T ain't no aperregotion. He's comin' daown the road naow along wi' bub, smokin' his pipe as earm as a clock. Come, naow. This grass is all a-burnin' up,” and he picked up a rustling wisp of hay, twisting it with both hands, while the parched clover leaves drifted out of it in a shower of fragments.

Josiah Hill, the Pioneer, the Ranger, the Green Mountain Boy, had become the patriarch of a populous town whereof he was once almost the sole human inhabitant. The contemporaries of his early manhood

were all gone, and to him alone were left memories of the old pioneer days, their hardships and the unsung deeds of humble heroes and heroines.

Through the mists of years the events of the past and his part in them loomed large to his vision, and lost nothing in the telling when there was no one left to dispute the garrulous tongue of old age. Yet if he was given to boasting, who shall say that even the humblest of those heroic pioneers had not a right to be proud that he was a founder of the Republic of the Green Mountains?

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